

"Our three guiding concepts are public benefit, culture and youth.

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Shanghai's skyline is towering, but from the ground, the city actually feels pretty compact.

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"What I got from the disease was something healthy people cannot know.

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BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY JANUARY 21 2005

NO. 190

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

Iraqi Cleric Optimistic for Kidnapped Chinese



An influential Iraqi religious group expressed optimism Wednesday over obtaining the release of the eight Chinese kidnapped in Iraq.

"All of the Iraqi people know the attitude of the Chinese people toward the Iraqi issue, and I am optimistic that the kidnapped Chinese will be released soon," Sheikh Harith Al Dhari, head of the Islamic Scholars Association, told Xinhua at a press conference.

"As long as the kidnappers claim themselves to be an Islamic party, I feel that the lives of the kidnapped are not in danger," he said.

He called on the kidnappers to release them immediately, saying he "appreciated the stand taken by the Chinese people" who are friends and supporters of the Iraqi people.

When asked about the efforts exerted by the association to help release the eight, Dhari said his organization had "issued an an-

nouncement calling on all the kidnapping powers to release all the kidnapped for the occasion of Eid Adhha (Greater Bairam), whether they (the hostages) are Iraqis or not."

"We asked the Chinese embassy to issue a statement to clarify the nature of those eight kidnapped Chinese and we know that they are individuals who came on their own to work in a textile factory in Najaf and that they have no relation whatsoever with the occupation forces," said Dhari.

The Qatar-based Al Jazeera TV channel aired Tuesday a video showing the eight Chinese workers who were kidnapped last week as they were heading to the Jordanian capital.

(Xinhua)

A video tape aired by al-Jazeera TV on Tuesday shows the eight hostages holding Chinese passports, flanked by masked militants.

Xinhua Photo

SEPA Issues Bans on 30 Illegal Projects

By Annie Wei

At a press conference held by the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) in Beijing Tuesday, Pan Yue, vice-director of the administration announced bans on 30 illegal construction projects nationwide.

The bans are in accordance with the environment law implemented on September 1 last year, which states that no construction project may be implemented without an environmental impact assessment being completed.

Among the 30 projects, 26 are power plants, and all require large investments. Pan Yue said at the conference Tuesday that the administration had found that many small-scale high-energy consumption and heavily polluting power plants and chemical plants were under construction, some with the support of local governments.

Pan said the administration would deal with such cases firmly. In an interview with *21st Century Business Herald* Wednesday, he said that the serious violations were mainly the result of two factors; high demand for power and lack of awareness among certain local government bodies of the importance of environmental protection. He also said that the administration had taken strict measures on 68 environmental impact assessment departments which had failed to do their jobs properly.

Companies involved in the 30 projects include the three largest power enterprises, China Guodian, China Huadian and Datang Power. One of the banned projects, the Jinshajiang Xiluodu Power Plant would have been the second biggest power plant after the Three Gorges Reservoir, with a 126-million-watt total installed capacity and 44.6 billion yuan investment.

Wang Renkun, general designer

of the project was quoted in the internal publication of China Three Gorges Project Corporation last Friday as saying that the investment for environmental protection related to the project cost 600 million yuan, around 1.35 percent of the total investment, which was rare for hydro-power plants by international standards.

Liu Jipeng, a professor from the Capital University of Economics and Business has called for the government to open power plant investment to private and foreign investment, which would allow for more effective supervision.

Although he agreed with the purpose of the ban by the environmental administration, Liu questioned why the administration had not moved to halt the projects earlier, as some have almost been finished. "The dilemma right now is that it will either damage the environment or cause a huge investment loss."

Some areas and enterprises have permitted constructions that disregard the country's requirements. The government has called for power plant construction to be well planned, however the potential total output reached 150 million kilowatts in 2004, 150 percent of the planned 61 million kilowatts. The illegal construction exceeds what the environment can bear, and would lead to disorder in the development of high-energy consumption industries, according to Pan Yue.

Data collected by the State Development Planning Commission shows that China's total power volume had been increasing at a rate of 8 to 9 percent over the past 20 years. If it continues at that rate, by 2020, the installed capacity and power volume will be three times that of 2000, equal to the total amount for Western Europe.



Wall Memorial

Demolition of part of a former POW camp in Shenyang raises questions on relic protection

By Zhou Ying

A report Monday by the *Liaoshen Evening News*, a Shenyang based newspaper, revealed that part of the wall of a Japanese prisoner of war camp in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, was demolished Sunday after being mistakenly taken for an illegal construction.

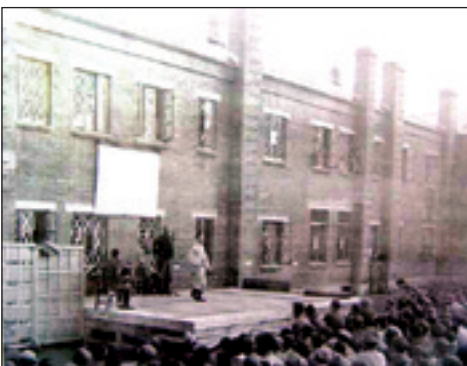
The report aroused nation-wide indignation, with people questioning how the local government could dare to dismantle a cultural relic of such significance.

After interviews with the Shenyang cultural relics department, the community administration department in Dadong district and experts from the September 18 War Research Center, a local non-governmental organization carrying out research on the Japanese invasion of China, *Beijing Today* found there was a wide gap between the government and experts in terms of the protection of cultural relics.

An oversight

Located among disused buildings and some crude dormitories of a nearby factory, the former prison camp building in Dadong District, Shenyang, is difficult to find without the help of local residents.

"There are more than 50 families living here," said Wan Xianrong, who has lived within the camp precinct for nearly ten years, "The two-storey building



The Allied Prisoners' Camp at Shenyang

Over 1500 Allied prisoners spent the worst two year and ten months of their lives during World War II at the Japanese Mukden Camp (Mukden was the former name of Shenyang. At least 250 died there. Most of the survivors have been bothered by unexplained illness and poor health since the Japanese surrender.

Allied POWs of World War II in the hands of Japanese were generally treated worse than those in the hands of the Germans. The death rate of Allied POWs interned by Germans and Italians was 4 percent, compared to over 30 percent for those in Japanese camps. Most unfortunate were the US POWs who were sent to Mukden, Manchuria, as many of them were used as guinea pigs for experiments conducted by the notorious Japanese germ warfare Unit 731.

(Information and photos provided by the September 18 War Research Center)



Zhang Yibo (right) and local residents inspect the demolished section of wall Sunday (top). The main building of the POW camp (above).

has been the dorm of a factory since the foundation of New China, and now you can see how shabby the room is."

Wan told *Beijing Today* that she has heard that each room, of less than 25 square meters, had been used during the war to house six allied prisoners.

A large pile of ruins 50 meters from the building was, according to the *Liaoshen Evening News*, part of the wall of the prison camp until a few days ago.

When asked about the demolition of the wall, director of the Dadong District community administration department, Yang Qi, told *Beijing Today*, "I am really innocent, because we were not informed before carrying out our work that there was a wall there that could not be torn down."

Yang explained that there actually should have been a complete wall around all four sides in the past, however only one short section of less than 150 meters was left now. "I had no idea that when we demolished the illegal constructions, they had incorporated more than 30 meters of the original camp wall," he said.

Yang said that before he went about his task of dismantling the illegal constructions, the department made no mention of the wall. "The Shenyang government ordered us to fulfill the task within one and a half months; therefore we really did not have time to consult with every other department," Yang told *Beijing Today*.

According to him, all the bricks from the demolished section of wall had been saved. "We immediately sealed up the bricks the moment we were informed that the wall was part of the camp, and we are waiting for instructions from the related department." Yang said if the provincial cultural relics department informed him that the wall should be reconstructed, they would certainly cooperate.

(Continued on page 2)

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Time to End Tax Favors

By Pan Hao

The issue of ending the system of tax favors by bringing all companies, domestic and foreign, under one tax regime has again become the focus of public debate.

Speaking at the China Economic Development conference Sunday, vice-minister of finance Lou Jiwei said that a recent

report in *China Business News* that 54 foreign firms had written to the government asking for an extension of the existing tax policy, proved "We did not explain [the proposed changes] enough." He also revealed that companies including IBM, Shell, Siemens and Motorola had expressed opposition to the proposals in talks with the Minis-

try of Finance.

The director of the State Administration of Taxation Xie Xuren said last Tuesday, "The unification of income tax rates should no longer be postponed."

Currently, the nominal income tax rate for domestic companies is 33 percent, while that for foreign companies stands at 15 percent.

In June last year, the Ministry of Finance entrusted GE to invite opinions on the proposed new taxation policy from foreign-funded companies in Beijing and Shanghai. After gathering feedback from these firms, GE sent a report discussing relevant issues to the State Council Legislative Affairs Office.

According to Xinhua, Lou Jiwei pointed out at the conference that the next step is to remove the system of tax favours and consequently enlarge the tax base. The 15 percent tax rate will be applied to high-tech firms as well as all companies based in China's western regions, regardless of whether they are domestic or foreign.

Party Launches Anti-corruption Program

By Qiu Jiaoning

A long-term anti-corruption mechanism was unveiled Sunday by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

The program is aimed at educating and supervising party members, preventing corruption and punishing those found to be corrupt, Xinhua reported Sunday.

"It is the CPC Central Committee, with Hu Jintao as the General Secretary, that has proposed to establish a mechanism to punish and prevent corruption," the report said, adding that anti-corruption is a matter of life or death for the Communist Party.

Under the program, a basic framework for the mechanism should be installed by 2010 and a long-term education system, power-operation supervision system and a

mechanism-based system will be completed later. As corruption remains a serious problem, the construction of the anti-corruption mechanism is a pressing but lasting task.

The program places education as the basis of anti-corruption work. Hence, anti-corruption education should be oriented towards the whole Party and the whole of society, with leading cadres as the focus. It calls for a strong cultural atmosphere of anti-corruption to be built up throughout society through various measures, laying stress on youth education.

At the same time, the government will pay closer attention to prevention or elimination of corruption-related problems. In general, the program aims at establishing a scientific, systematic, feasible and practicable mechanism for anti-corruption.

Olympics Sports and Venue Facilities Trade Show Announced

An international sports and venue facilities exhibition and trade show will be held in July, the Beijing Investment Promotion Bureau announced Wednesday.

"Beijing will build more than 30 sports venues for Olympics competition and a number of separate training centers will be reconstructed. Most projects will start this year or in 2006," said Jin Yan, deputy director of Beijing 2008 Project Construction Headquarters Office at a press conference on Wednesday.

"Olympics sports venues and related constructions should not only meet the needs of the games, but also implement the themes of Green Olympics, Hi-Tech Olympics, People's Olympics," Jin said.

The International Sports and Venue Facilities Beijing 2005 Exhibition and Trade Show will be held from July 15 to 17 at Beijing's China International Exhibition Center.

Some 1,000 companies are

expected to attend the exhibition, 60 percent of which are foreign, organization committee member Liu Nan said.

Companies invited include those with business in sports venue infrastructure, auxiliary facilities, security systems, sports and fitness equipment, security and emergency systems, special vehicles, sports equipment and accessories, sports venue development, operation management and other related services, according to Liu.

"Companies specializing in equipment and construction technology of temporary venues, new and environmental-friendly materials for venues, landscaping and horticulture are particularly welcomed," Liu added.

During the trade show, a series of special forums on cooperation on venue construction and operation will be arranged to meet the needs of the suppliers and venue owners.

(Xinhua)



Shanghai Airlines began accepting reservations Wednesday on direct charter flights to Taiwan for Taiwan traders during the Spring Festival period.

Xinhua Photo

Cross-Straits Consensus Reached on Direct Charter Flights

By Nie Zhiyang

Aviation authorities from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have reached an agreement on direct charter flights for Taiwan traders on the mainland during the coming Spring Festival.

At a news conference in Macao Saturday, Pu Zhaozhou, vice-president of the Cross-Straits Aviation Transport

Exchange Council, and Le Daxin, chairman of the Taipei Aviation Transport Commerce Trade Council, said that business and technical arrangements for the direct charter flights had been set.

They announced that non-stop flights between major cities on China's mainland and Taiwan will operate from January 29 to February 20 exclu-

sively for Taiwan residents doing business on the mainland and their families to return home for the traditional Lunar New Year holiday.

On Tuesday, the Civil Aviation Administration of China released the list of six mainland airlines involved, namely Air China, China Eastern, China Southern, Shanghai Airlines, Xiamen Airlines and Hainan Airlines.

Watchdog Resumes IPO Issuance

By Sun Yongjian

China's issuance of initial public offerings (IPOs) will be resumed after a four month moratorium since August 30 last year, according to a statement issued by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) last Friday.

China Huadian Power International, a subsidiary of state-owned energy giant China Huadian Group, with assets totaling 89 billion yuan (US \$10.8 billion) at the end of 2003, will be the first company on the Chinese mainland to

go public in 2005. China International Capital Corporation will play the role of underwriter, an official with CSRC said.

The resumption of IPOs is in line with pricing inquiry regulations, under which institutional investors will be granted the right to participate in decisions on IPO pricing. Final IPO prices will be decided by the result of an inquiry, the CSRC said statement.

IPO prices were previously determined by the net assets per share, but there were com-

plaints that many IPOs were overpriced and lacking transparency, according to a market analyst who declined to be named.

According to the new regulations, investors' interests would be secured as they will have more say in the price decision, the analyst told *Beijing Today* Monday.

Some 134 companies are expected to launch IPO under the new regulations, according to a list of IPO pricing inquiries released by the China Securities Association last Friday.

(Continued from page 1)
Opposing views

"The blame does not lie with the community administration," Zhang Lianxing, deputy department chief of Shenyang Municipality Cultural Heritage Bureau, told *Beijing Today*.

Zhang showed a sketch map on which the protected area was clearly plotted. "According to the experts and historians, the area of the camp originally covered almost 60,000 square meters. In 2004, we decided to protect some of the main buildings," he said.

According to Zhang, the government consulted with experts from the September 18 War Research Center before making the decision on which parts of the site should be protected, however nobody ever mentioned that a section of the wall remained intact at that time. "It was quite hard to identify among the illegal constructions," Zhang added.

"The buildings of the camp are scattered over a large area. What we can do is to protect several key structures, such as the dormitories that housed the

POWs and the hospital, but not the entire area," he said.

However, some experts disagree with Zhang, "A cultural relic is not a set of walls or one building. It is a complete compound, which includes every building inside. I strongly disagree with their idea of only protecting the representative ones," said Zhang Yibo, chairman of the September 18 War Research Center.

It was right to demolish the illegal construction outside the area but not the wall itself, he added.

"This is the proof of what Japan did historically. We should set up a museum here to record the past and remind people in the world the price of the war," he said.

Zhang Lianxing said the Shenyang Municipality Cultural Heritage Bureau understands the feeling of historians; however it was simply not practical to preserve the whole site.

"According to our rough estimate last year, we have to spend as much as 60 million yuan carrying out the task, including improving the surrounding envi-

ronment, setting up the museum, and finding new accommodation for the people currently living on the site, and we really do not have such large budget," he said.

According to Zhang, the government will do its best to protect the site. "We plan to erect a tablet on the building before May this year," Zhang told *Beijing Today*.

He suggested that the government could rebuild a short section of wall nearby the building. "That is enough. There is no need to restore the site to its original appearance, especially in view of the financial restraints we face," Zhang added.

Coming back

A group of more than 10 Americans, three survivors of the camp along with descendants of other survivors, came to Shenyang in September 2003 to visit the site on a tour arranged by the Truth Council of World War II, a US-based non-governmental organization.

According to Li Shu, deputy chairman of the September 18 War Research Center, it was the



The American delegation visits the site of the POW camp in Shenyang in September 2003.

first time that survivors had returned to the former camp. Robert Rosendahl, 82, one of the three survivors, refused at first to take a picture during the visit. "I don't want to take a picture, why the hell do I want to take a picture? I spent 59 years trying to forget this place," he was quoted as saying in a report in *The New York Times* on September 19.

Rosendahl, along with two other former American soldiers, Oliver Allen, 82, and Harold Leith, 84, came back to Shenyang, in part, they said, because they want to make certain that their obscure but brutal chapter of the story is not forgotten. "One of these

days, people like Bob and me will be gone," said Bettie Rosendahl, Bob Rosendahl's wife, "Then there won't be anybody left to tell the story," she told *Liaoshen Evening News* at that time.

The three recalled that all the prisoners were forced to work in a nearby factory that was being built to make machine parts for the Japanese war effort. Allen said that when the Japanese overseers went to lunch, the prisoners would sabotage the plant, dumping tools into the wet concrete.

"Chinese people in the factory really gave us a great help, they gave us food covertly, and even helped three of the allied prisoners run away by providing a map," he recalled.

Li Shu said that since then, survivors from America have visited the camp in Shenyang nearly every year. "They really do not want to see the place ruined; it is our common wish that the government could protect the entire site."

Photo provided by the September 18 War Research Center

Irregular Management Buy Out of SOEs to be Curbed

By Chu Meng

The State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) issued a notice on its website Monday announcing the launch of a series of examinations aimed at strengthening supervision and regulation of irregular management buy outs of state owned enterprises.

Examinations in the steel, electrolytic aluminum and cement industries will target two specific aspects: whether a management buy out accords with the state's relevant industrial policies and macro control; and whether the buy out has been submitted to SASAC for approval. The announcement follows the step late last year of banning management of large SOEs from acquiring a stake in the company while giving more flexibility to small and medium enterprises.

The notice also suggested that the government is likely to issue a detailed regulation on management buy outs in small and medium-sized state owned enterprises within the first quarter to improve discipline in the sector. Such a regulation would be the first in China to directly address this issue. Existing laws and regulations only provide guidelines or general principles. SASAC has also drafted a four-year plan for policy-arranged SOE bankruptcy to allow more poor-performers to withdraw.

Foreign Companies Set to Increase Investment

By Pan Hao

A report on foreign direct investment (FDI) released last Friday indicates that 82 percent of foreign-funded companies expect to increase investment in the areas of production, sales, and research and development in China between 2005 and 2007.

The report, published by the Ministry of Commerce, is based on research by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, which began in June last year. The target foreign-funded companies are mainly on the list of Business Week's Global 1,000, in the IT, automobile, electronics and chemical industries.

The research also showed that 61 percent of those companies expect to continue to increase investment in research and development.

The report also pointed out that the Yangtze Delta Economic Zone is the area boasting the largest proportion of planned investment, followed by the Bohai Economic Zone and the Pearl River Economic Zone.

Surgery Accidents to be Covered by Insurance

By Nie Zhiyang

A trial of surgery accident insurance is planned to start in third class hospitals in Beijing including Anzhen Hospital, Tian-tan Hospital and the Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital this month, *Beijing News* reported Tuesday.

Unlike medical liability insurance, on which a premium is paid by hospitals and doctors, surgery accident insurance includes the patients treated. The coverage ranges from death, disability and complications resulting from the surgery.

The insurance is divided into over 100 items, according to nine basic surgery categories.

Twelve levels for economic compensation are set in terms of the degree of risk the operation entails.

It is also stipulated that following payment of compensation, victims of surgery accidents may demand an investigation if they suspect the accident was caused by medical malpractice.

Gome Owner Keeps Share Sale under Veil

By Chu Meng

Huang Guangyu, the wealthy chairman of Gome Home Appliance was reportedly considering selling 35 percent of his stake in the company, worth about HK\$1.4 billion, early last week. However, Huang issued a denial two days after those reports surfaced and said he had made no decision, *Beijing News* reported on Wednesday.

The report quoted Hong Kong investors as saying Huang was prepar-

ing to sell the shares to the company's parent firm, Hong Kong-based Gome Electronic Appliances Corp, to receive up to \$1.5 billion in cash.

Huang, who founded Gome at 18, folded the company into China Eagle, a Hong Kong-listed entity he controls, in exchange for shares and convertible notes. Between his shares and two trenches of convertible notes, he holds a 74.9 percent direct stake and potential 97 percent stake in Gome and China Eagle.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange has a minimum public float rule that no more than 75 percent of a company's shares can be in one person's hands.

Therefore, Huang was considering reducing his stake to 50 or 60 percent by converting and selling shares, *Beijing News* said.

He was quoted as saying that because the per share price had not been set, he had no way of making a decision to sell or not.

The 35-year-old tycoon said he wanted to sell some of his shares to put more money towards his firm's core retail and property operations. In such a deal, Huang's stake in China Eagle's real estate arm would drop to 67.2 percent and the buyer would hold a 24 percent stake.

Gome Home Appliance is expanding quickly around China. It currently operates 120 stores and plans to open 187 new outlets in 2005 and 218 in 2006.

China Hits the Road

More than five million automobiles were manufactured and sold in China in 2004, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Here, a young man checks the leg room in a new Citroen car at a domestic auto show last June.

Xinhua Photo



Mittal Steel Gets Piece of SOE

By Xu Chuanmei

Global steel giant Mittal Steel Co last Friday agreed to buy a 37.17 percent stake in Valin Tube & Wire Co., a listed subsidiary of Hunan Valin Iron & Steel Group Co., for 2.6 billion yuan (\$314 million).

Hunan Province-based Valin is among China's eight largest steelmakers with an annual steel production capacity of 8.5 million tons. It produced over five million tons of steel and recorded sales of 16.1 billion yuan for the first three quarters of 2004.

Mittal Steel, registered in the Netherlands, is one of the largest and most global steelmakers in the world, with revenues of approximately \$16 billion and steel production of 32 million tons for the first nine months of 2004. It has operations in 14 countries.

The deal, if completed as planned in the second quarter of 2005, will mark the first sizable foreign investment into a state-owned steel company in China. After its completion, Mittal Steel and Valin Group will have an equal shareholding of 37.17 percent each and shared management control.

Analysts said the transaction is a milestone for Mittal Steel's business in China, the world's largest consumer and producer of steel. A year ago, Mittal announced plans to establish a cold-rolling and coating plant in Yingkou, Liaoning province. The company also sells significant amounts of steel to China from its plant in Kazakhstan.

"Strategically this is a key acquisition for Mittal Steel, as it provides us with our first production platform in the world's fastest growing steel market," the company's Chairman and CEO Lakshmi Mittal said.

Li Xiaowei, chairman of Valin Group and Valin Company, said the transaction "will have a positive impact on the Chinese steel industry in terms of its current strategic restructuring to resolve issues of lack of scale," and the co-operation in technology and sharing of global resources will be "critical for the company to enter the international steel industry."

Watsons Widening Reach in China Market

By Annie Wei

The 100th Watsons health and beauty store in the Chinese mainland opened in Guangzhou on Sunday. The chain is a division of Hong Kong-based Hutchison Whampoa.

Watsons' China operations showed over 100 percent growth last year, the company announced Sunday. It said it planned to invest over 50 million yuan in 2005 in marketing and sales initiative to further develop the market.

The company's plan calls for opening new stores in 28 Chinese cities, giving it 30 outlets in Beijing, 40 in

Shanghai and 35 in Guangzhou.

"The key to building stronger competitiveness lies in enhancing network coverage, brand equity and logistics operations, and only strong players can emerge victorious in the keen competition of the Chinese retail market," Ivor Morton, managing director of Watsons China said.

Watsons also said it would expand its product line to 700 items from 500 items this year.

Watsons CEO Andrew Miles set plans to open a new store in Asia every day in 2005, the company

statement said.

Last Friday, Watsons also announced a cash offer of 534 million euros for Marionnaud SA, a leading French perfumery and cosmetics retailer. Watsons said completion of the transaction would expand its chain to include more than 5,662 stores, making it the world's largest retail company in the sector.

The move could pave the way for Watson's expansion in Europe, since it had not established a presence in France or other key markets like Italy, Spain and Austria, the statement said.

Greencool President Professes Innocence

By Sun Yongjian

Gu Chujuan, president of domestically-listed home appliance maker Greencool Group, is faces charges of trying to bribe Lang Xianping, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the *Beijing Morning Post* reported on Wednesday. But Gu held his own press release on Tuesday to plead his innocence and level his own charges at the plaintiff in the dispute.

Sung Chun, a stockbroker with Hong Kong-based Sun Hung Kai & Co., sued Gu on January 15 demanding HK\$10.533 million in payment for "public relations work."

At the end of 2001, Greencool's share price dropped due to unfavorable market rumors, Sun's suit stated. The broker introduced Lang to Gu and gave the professor some materials on Greencool's finances. Later, Lang wrote articles about Gu and his company that were published in the Chinese magazine *New Fortune* and prompted a quick rise in the company's share price.

Sung said Gu had promised to pay him HK\$10 million to HK\$20 million as a reward for the introduc-

tion. Then in 2003, Gu allegedly told Sung he would sell shares in domestic appliance company Kelong held by two other companies he owned and give Sung the proceeds.

In May last year, Gu informed Sun Hung Kai & Co. Ltd. that he had transferred payments of 5.24 million yuan and HK\$5.29 million to the account of an offshore company owned by Sung, the lawsuit alleged.

At his press release, Gu said he learned on May 31 last year that some shares in two subsidiaries of Greencool had been sold under-the-table and outside of exchange scrutiny. Gu immediately reported the matter to Hong Kong police and Sun Hung Kai & Co.

Morgan Stanley Buys CBD Office Building

By James Liu

Morgan Stanley, selected the best investment bank of 2004 by *FinanceAsia* and *The Asset*, purchased the north tower at R&F Twintower on the East Third Ring Road for investment purposes, according to a news release run Tuesday by international property adviser DTZ.

Richard Lum, director of DTZ's office department, predicted 2005 would witness a rapid increase in investment by foreign financial institutions in Beijing's property market.

"Although supply in 2004 was more than that in the previous two years, demand was strong and the average vacancy rate dropped to 12.5 percent, down 2.3 percent from 2003. This situation might be changed in the first half 2005 as Fortune Plaza Tower A and Full Tower, both in the CBD, will be completed," Lum said.

The limited availability of office buildings in the central business district has prompted prospective tenants to focus on office buildings nearing completion. For instance, PricewaterhouseCoopers has pre-leased about 19,000 square meters in Fortune Plaza Tower A.

Since December 1, 2004, foreign banks have been allowed to provide local currency services to Chinese enterprises. Also as part of China's commitments to open its insurance sector, qualified foreign banks and insurance companies will be moving into the market and seeking new office space to strengthen their business.

"With these duplex factors in demand, grade-A office buildings in the CBD area will remain hot," Lum said.

GSK Gets Permit to Deal Drugs

By Deng Minjie

UK-based GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the world's second largest pharmaceutical company, has obtained a license to market its drugs in China.

GSK became the first wholly foreign owned company to receive approval to enter the pharmaceutical wholesale and retail markets in China when it got the OK last October.

"GSK can only distribute drugs under our own brand and offer related services in the China market," Xiao Weiqun, public affairs manager at the Beijing office of GSK China told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

"The permit also allows GSK to handle distribution of its products in China, which should give us an advantage over competitors. Our main focus, though, is on pharmaceutical research and development, so getting this license does not mean we plan on withdrawing distribution rights from our agents," Xiao said.

Standard Chartered to Buy Stake in Bohai Bank

By Chu Meng

Tianjin-based Bohai Bank announced on Monday its establishment had finally been approved by the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC).

The UK's Standard Chartered bank came to an agreement at the same time to purchase a 19.9 percent stake in the new Chinese bank through acquiring regulatory approval from the CBRC and the State Council, the Tianjin government said the same day.

Private Bohai Bank's owners include state-owned enterprises in China's northeastern Bohai region. Standard Chartered's inclusion in the ownership fold is likely supported by the government's reported requirement that all newly formed commercial banks have strategic foreign investors, to encourage greater efficiency and better management, before regulatory approval is given.

It is unclear how much Standard Chartered will pay for the 19.9 percent stake in Bohai, but it has been reported that it will use existing cash reserves for the acquisition. Bohai Bank is extremely small compared to other Chinese banks that have been targeted for strategic investment by other foreign banks and investment firms, suggesting that the acquisition could be less costly.

Rosy Forecasts for Property Market

By Chu Meng

In China's residential market, corporate expansions have resulted in a subsequent pick-up in leasing demand and Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong will continue to witness strong take-ups in 2005, said a survey report released by Jones Lang LaSalle.

The increase of rent rates is likely to slow, especially in Shanghai and Beijing, due to a continuous flow of new supply, and rents in Hong Kong are clearly showing signs of recovery, according to the report.

Real estate market watchers outside of China continued to worry about housing prices, but government indicators showed price increases in many mainland markets have slowed, it said. In Shanghai, prices rose around 20 percent in 2004, down from nearly 30 percent in 2003. Top quality projects in Beijing and Shanghai continued to sell well.

In the office market in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, there would be a window of short supply over the next two years, Jones Lang LaSalle said.

HP Regrouping for Competition

By Annie Wei

Hewlett Packard announced last Friday it is combining its imaging and printing group and personal systems group, which covers personal computers and other products.

Vyomesh Joshi, former executive vice president of the imaging and printing group, was appointed president of the new department.

"Under Vyomesh's leadership, the imaging and printing group grew to be a highly profitable \$24 billion business," HP Chairman and CEO Carly Fiorina was quoted as saying in a company statement.

Many PC manufacturers are scrambling to keep up with intensifying market competition. Apple released a \$499 Macintosh computer last week and IBM sold its PC operations to Lenovo at the end of last year.

The move would not have any direct influence on HP's China business for the time being, Michelle Wei, a public relations executive from HP's Beijing office said.

EU Considers US-style Green Card Immigration System

Brussels, January (NewsEdge Corporation) – The European Union is considering introducing a US-style green card system to attract immigrants with special skills, a leading EU commissioner said Tuesday.

Permanent work visas based “on the American model” is one of the options the EU is mulling as it faces a shortage of skilled labor and an aging population, Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Franco Frattini told reporters.

The proposal was part of an initiative to get EU governments to agree on common immigration standards, a contentious issue in the 25-member block.

The European Commission says

the EU must act to ensure it keeps a level of skilled and educated workers so it can compete with the United States and Canada, which both have a long tradition of recruiting educated immigrants from poorer countries.

EU justice and interior ministers agreed last year to set up a common asylum and immigration policy by 2010. The EU governments also agreed to improve the integration of immigrants in the wake of growing ethnic tensions in several EU nations.

Immigration is a highly sensitive issue in the EU. There is anti-immigrant sentiment in many countries, but aging populations across the 25 members block make it imperative that

new workers be brought in.

Analyst's Take:

The EU Commission is looking at a range of immigration reforms to deal with Europe's severe shortage of workers. The reforms are based on two issues.

First, with economic globalization, international competition has become more fierce, and countries need highly skilled workers who can contribute to the economy.

So this is a necessary step in the EU's bid to rival the US and Japan in worldwide trade competitiveness. However, it does not mean the EU will open the door to unrestricted economic migration.

Second, the EU needs to deal with the problem of an aging pop-

ulation. The existing immigrant policy is quite strict and needs to be addressed.

Although common policies on immigration and asylum are developing between the EU member states, many issues are still controlled at the national level.

The EU proposals would involve targeting skilled immigrant candidates including high-tech workers to fill job shortages. The move is intended to stimulate discussion rather than form a new policy in itself.

– **Zhang Jianxiong, Professor from the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Deng Minjie)**

Airbus Unveils A380 Superjumbo



Airbus officially lifted the curtain on its A380 superjumbo – the world's biggest passenger aircraft that will eclipse Boeing's 747 when it takes to the skies next year.

The European company unveiled the aircraft, which can take up to 840 passengers, at a glitzy ceremony at its headquarters in Toulouse, southwest France on January 18 .

French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero

attended the presentation, along with 5,000 guests from the world's aviation sector and media.

AFP Photo

US Wants WTO Investigation of EU Customs Rules

Washington, January 13 (AFP) – The United States called for the World Trade Organization to set up a complaints panel to investigate European Union customs rules that Washington says penalize US exports.

The call for a dispute settlements panel is the latest stage in mounting transatlantic trade hostility.

The US government filed a complaint with the WTO on September 21 condemning inconsistencies in EU customs rules, which are handled differently by different states in the 25-member bloc.

“Consultations between the US and the EU were held in mid-November, but were unable to resolve the dispute,” said a statement by the US Trade Representative's Office.

It added: “Although the EU is a customs union, there is no single EU customs administration. Lack of uniformity, coupled with lack of procedures for prompt EU-wide review, can hinder US exports, particularly for small to mid-size businesses.

“WTO rules require WTO members to administer their customs laws in a uniform, impartial and reasonable manner. They also require members to provide tribunals for prompt review and correction of administrative action relating to customs matters. The United States considers that the EU fails to meet either of these requirements.”

An EU source said in September that the US complaint had “no legal basis” and that the European Commission complied with all WTO customs rules.

Analyst's Take:

Trade friction is increasing between the EU and the US, despite their close trade cooperation over the years. Trade conflicts between the two sides are inevitable.

There are almost no tariff barriers among developed countries, while some non-tariff barriers have emerged such as subsidies, dumping, hygienic standards and customs rules. Now, protection measures are shifting from non-tariff barriers to disputes on WTO regulations.

The EU's inner contractions have intensified recently, after absorbing ten new member states. The new member states, most of which are in a market transitional period, have relatively weak economies. In short, the EU is still not a genuinely unified market union, certainly in terms of customs rules.

Owing to the mature level and technical conditions of its market, the EU can hardly unify its customs rules soon. Trade conflicts between the EU and US are expected to concentrate on services, agriculture and the financial industry in future. However, both sides are bound to make some concessions. After all, both sides would be hurt by a trade war. The EU should take active measures to speed up the integration process, but the measures need a run-in period and cannot be thoroughly implemented in a single step.

– **Fu Mengzi, director of the Institute of American Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)**

NYSE Eyes European Volumes

London, January 15 (Reuters) – The New York Stock Exchange, the world's biggest share market, is mulling an earlier start to trading in a bid to steal volume from European exchanges, notably the London Stock Exchange, the *Financial Times* reported on Saturday.

But the Big Board ruled out making a bid for the LSE which is currently holding talks with Deutsche Boerse and Euronext about their rival takeover plans to buy the London exchange.

The *FT* article quoted NYSE President and Co-Chief Operating Officer Catherine Kinney as saying the Big Board was not bidding for the London Stock Exchange “but would absolutely love some of their trading.”

Kinney said the idea was at a very early stage and that NYSE was exploring ways of becoming a second-ary market for European listed stocks.

So far there have been no successful moves by one exchange to steal significant share trading volume from a rival.

Recently in Europe, both Deutsche Boerse and the LSE have failed to make significant inroads into Dutch share trading, a core market

for Euronext.

The NYSE, like many other exchanges, is under pressure to find new revenue streams as trading fees and other traditional sources of income come under pressure.

The Nasdaq Stock Market, the US No. 2 stock exchange, is trying to take trading volume away from the NYSE through a dual-listing strategy.

Analyst's Take:

It's common for exchanges such as NYSE to want to attract the best performing companies. When top companies are listed, it can win more fame, as well as more investment and profit, for the exchange. So favorable conditions are offered to overseas companies, such as cutting audit expenses.

The US-based stock exchanges thirst for more top overseas listed companies which can bring more vigor to the market. Meanwhile, many large Chinese domestic enterprises such as New China Life Insurance Co., Ltd. are looking towards overseas markets, partly because the domestic securities market is depressed.

– **Xu Yiding, an analyst with Minzu Securities (Sun Yongjian)**

Seoul Has New Chinese Name

Beijing, January 20 (Xinhua) – Seoul's city government has decided to change its Chinese name, still known to Chinese by its ancient name of Hancheng.

The new name combines two Chinese characters, 首尔, which produce the sound “Shouer” similar in pronunciation to the South Korean name Seoul, officials said.

At present, Chinese refer to Seoul as Hancheng (Hanseong in Korean), the Chinese name the city was known by in past centuries.

“The name Hanseong has not been used for nearly 100 years to refer to Seoul,” Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak said at a press conference Wednesday.

“It is a general perception



Seoul Mayor, Lee Myung-bak, explains the meaning of his city's Chinese name Shouer as “the city of first place”.

Xinhua Photo

in the world community and an international practice to call the capital city Seoul, not Hanseong.”

Lee said the city government would use the new name in translations of official city documents and would request that China adopt it.

Titan Is Europe's Latest Space Success

Frankfurt, January 16 (AP) – Finally, after decades of running third in space headlines behind the US and Soviet-Russian programs, the 15-country European Space Agency (ESA) last week captured center stage with the successful landing of the Huygens probe on Saturn's largest moon, Titan, after a seven-year voyage.

The mission was operated in cooperation with US-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), achieving a string of successes including sending an orbiter to photograph the surface of Mars, flying a spacecraft into lunar

orbit with an innovative ion propulsion system and launching a probe to land on a comet.

Pictures from Huygens showing what appeared to be streambeds carved by fluid and the shoreline of a lake of liquid methane had ESA officials and scientists clinking glasses of champagne Friday over the first spacecraft landing on a moon other than Earth's. Later this year, another spacecraft is to set off for Venus. A more distant dream: send a lander to scoop a half-kilogram of Martian soil and fly it back to Earth for analysis.

Indian Ocean Tsunami Death Toll Approaches Quarter Million

Banda Aceh, Indonesia, January 19 (AFP) – The death toll from last month's Indian Ocean tsunami disaster rose towards a quarter of a million while floods hampered relief efforts in worst-hit Indonesia's Aceh province.

The Indonesian death toll jumped to 166,320, the health ministry said late Wednesday, more than 50,000 higher than the government's previous tally.

A member of the ministry's disaster center, Dr. Ina, told AFP that 166,080 people had been confirmed killed in Aceh, while there were 240 fatalities in the neighboring province of North Sumatra.

With the latest tolls, the tsunami triggered by a 9.0-magnitude quake off the coast of Sumatra island have left nearly 220,000 dead in 11 Indian Ocean countries.

Officials still hauling decomposed bodies from Aceh's tsunami debris said about 3,500 cadavers were being removed each day, more than three weeks after the disaster, while monsoon floods created a new headache for relief workers trying to bring aid along inundated roads.

The secretary of Aceh's disaster control taskforce, Haniff Asmara, told AFP the body collection process was likely to take another month.

IBM Impresses with Growing Services Revenue

January 19, (NewsFactor) – IBM says its services and consulting unit helped to drive up overall company revenue to US\$27.7 billion – a 6.8 percent increase in the last quarter of 2004 compared to the year-ago quarter. And profit came in at \$3 billion. The services unit alone showed stellar performance with a 10 percent increase in sales and 25 percent jump in profit.

Hewlett-Packard counts IBM as its major competitor and has developed a large services division. Even Dell

has recognized that its ultra-efficient production methods will not yield the same kind of profit margin as services, which is why it has begun offering them.

“IBM understands that you cannot come up with the perfect cookie and continue to stamp it out making good profits forever. Selling its PC business to another company is a major sign that times have changed. The big money for them isn't in hardware anymore,” said Synovus Investment Advisers analyst Daniel Morgan to NewsFactor.

Global Online Music Sales Rise Tenfold in 2004

London, January 19 (AFP) – Online music sales in Europe and the United States rocketed in 2004, with a tenfold increase to more than 200 million downloaded tracks purchased, a recording industry body said.

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) added in its annual report that the fight against hacking and illegal downloads made significant progress as consumer attitudes changed.

Paid-for downloads in Britain leapt from zero in 2003 to nearly 6.0 million tracks during 2004, and from 20 million to 140 million tracks in the United States. The IFPI, which represents over 1,450 producers and phonographic distributors



worldwide, said in its annual report that the supply of music available digitally was proliferating across online and mobile phone platforms.

“Portable players, led by the hugely successful iPod, and mobile phones, are helping transform the consumer experience of enjoying music and creating revenues. The global digital music market was estimated to be worth 330 million dollars in 2004, and looks set to double in 2005,” the report said.

By Tian Yuan

Members of China's latest South Pole exploration became the first humans to reach Antarctica's highest point, the Dome-A inland icecap, on Tuesday.

A 13-strong team set out from the Zhongshan Station on the southeast coast of the Antarctica on December 12, 2004 for a freezing, high-altitude journey covering 1,200 kilometers. Machinist Gai Junxian had to turn back due to severe altitude sickness, but the 12 others made it to the summit in fairly good condition.

The explorers erected the Chinese flag on the spot and held a solemn ceremony as it was first raised.

Preliminary measurement by global positioning system showed the peak at Dome-A is 4,093 meters above sea level. Its brutal climate has earned it a reputation as one of the world's most inaccessible places.

"Dome-A is a crucial point on the South Pole. No systematic scientific research has been done by any country at Dome-A before," Wei Wenliang, an official with China's Arctic and Antarctic Administration told *China Daily*. "To climb up the peak of Dome-A and do scientific research there will bring a breakthrough in humanity's polar ventures."

The area could hide valuable clues about the history of human evolution, according to information from the administration. The Dome-A plateau has relatively simple dynamic processes, making it a good place for icecap research. It is also one of the coldest places on Antarctica, so it is an important vantage point for collecting meteorological data.

In keeping with the unwritten rule of Antarctic exploration that the first group to reach a place is responsible for leading scientific work there, the Arctic and Antarctic Administration has decided China will complete the exploration of Dome-A even at the sacrifice of some other polar programs.

Chinese Explorers Summit South Pole



The Chinese team became the first people to reach Antarctica's highest point, called Dome-A. Xinhua Photo



Postmarks from the Bottom of the World

By Tian Yuan

Local philatelists can get a chilly thrill with a special postmark from the post office at the Chinese Antarctic Great Wall Station on letters sent before February 1.

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of China's first Antarctic expedition, the State Postal Bureau and the State Oceanic Administration have decided to reopen the South Pole post office, first set up on February 20, 1985.

Beijing International Post Office clerk Yong Gaoqian was sent out as the station's first employee since resuming operations. Yong set out with China's 21st Antarctic scientific research

team and arrived at the polar station last Friday.

Interested people can send postcards or mail to the station, which will stamp them and send them back to make valuable collector items. The base charge for sending a letter to the polar station is seven yuan and the postage for postcards is 4.5 yuan.

Letters sent to the Great Wall Station Post Office should be sent in ordinary envelopes with the addresses of the station and the sender written clearly. The address of the post office is: Post Office of the Chinese Antarctic Great Wall Station, Via Frei Base, Punta Arena, Chile.

By Liu Zhaoxi

Participants in a not-for-profit residential tower project held their first meeting this weekend in the auditorium of a Beijing middle school and announced the establishment of their union.

The project, initiated by 31-year-old engineer Yu Linggang in 2003, aims at building a residential tower just for project participants willing to pool their funds.

Yu's plan calls for participants to set up a legal entity, purchase a piece of land through auction, hire a qualified contractor to construct an apartment building and then divide the apartments among members. Participants will also take care of everything related to the building by themselves, making their own decisions while sharing the risks and benefits, without the involvement of real estate developers. *Beijing Today* first reported on his plan on December 24.

Dream Home Team Meets



Xinhua Photo

The meeting was an opportunity for the participants to get together and set the rules of procedure for the continuation of the project, said Meng Xiansheng, a lawyer from the Renhe Law Firm, who took part in the meeting.

Members agreed to hold subsequent meetings to discuss democratic practices within the group, specific steps in construction and how to get bank loans, Yu told *Beijing Today*.

About 200 people have joined the union and paid the 100-yuan membership fee. The money would be used to print promotional materials and pay for the cost of future meetings, Yu said.

"The project's prospects are good," Meng said. "It has proven pretty popular."

The legal entity, either a company or other organization, would be registered to run the project after Chinese New Year, Yu added.

Love Trumps AIDS

By Lu Xiaonan

A collective marriage of five couples in Yongji County, Jilin Province on Tuesday has drawn a lot of domestic press coverage because at least one partner in each pair has AIDS.

More than 1,000 guests from around the county turned out to celebrate the occasion.

"Both people in one of the couples have AIDS and one person in each of the rest has the disease," *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on Wednesday.

Before the weddings, most of the brides and grooms to be received guidance and advice from professionals at the county's Center for Disease Control and Prevention, including information on how not to infect their spouses and maintain their health. Each AIDS patient preparing to tie the knot was also given 40,000 from the center, the report said.

Dong Haiwen, who was diagnosed with AIDS in 2003 after earning a living by selling his blood for eight years, divorced his wife, Wang Shuyan, not long after because he did not want to endanger her or the rest of his family. But after a year of working in other parts of the country, he could not bear being without his wife.

"He contracted the virus while trying to take care of our poor family. We need to overcome this together," Wang told *Beijing Youth Daily*. The couple married again on Monday.

Couples made up of one healthy person and one with HIV/AIDS were brave but needed to be prudent, Xu Wenqing from the United Nation Children's Fund said. They faced considerable risk of spreading the infection and the HIV-positive spouse passing away well before his or her healthy mate, Xu added.



The happy couples

Photo by Guo Feng



Eight of the 16 domestic science students that arrived on Friday from Hebei found work as housekeepers the same day. Photo by Zhang Xuejun

Learning to Keep House

By Dong Nan

Last Friday, 16 college students from Hebei Industrial Professional Technique College arrived in Beijing to begin two months of practice towards becoming housekeepers. Eight of them were hired that same night and all of them found jobs by the end of the weekend.

Mr. He, from Heyishijia Educational and Science Corp, which arranged the training activity, told *Beijing Today* that the students were all domestic science majors and their coursework included family financial management, child education, psychology and English.

Most students had certification as middle-level secretaries, drivers licenses and proof of English ability, He said, adding they were aged 20 to 22 and four were men. During Spring Festival, a dozen more students from the college would come to Beijing for practice, he said.

"I don't care if they are good at doing housework," said Mr. Hao, who would not reveal his profession or full name. "What makes me interested is their high level of education. I'm hoping they can help teach my eight-year-old son."

Hao said he used to em-

ploy an illiterate young woman to do housework though she could not teach his son and paid her 350 yuan a month.

His wife decided to hire one of the young students, surnamed Wang, after having a brief discussion with her in English. Hao said that considering the high quality of the college students, their relatively high pay was reasonable.

According to He, the students earned monthly wages of 1,200 to 1,500 yuan. Most of the people interested in hiring "college student housekeepers" were corporate bosses, high-level managers or well-off intellectuals, he said.

Since many migrant workers in the domestic field have left Beijing to spend Spring Festival in their hometowns, the city is facing a shortage of 60,000 housekeepers during the holiday, according to predictions made by the Beijing Domestic Science Association. A survey done by the Beijing Community Service Center last year showed the capital needed another 180,000 full-time and temporary housekeepers and around 10 percent of families could not found household help. As of last November, that proportion reached 30 percent, the survey said.

Finance for the Fair Sex

By Tian Yuan

The city's first bank for women started operations at the Wangjing branch of the Bank of Beijing on Monday.

The bank provided financial products targeted directly at women, as well as other services such as instruction on insurance and financial management and even haircuts and facials, bank official Huang Ying told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Huang said the Wangjing branch had found that over 70 percent of its customers were women, especially VIP customers who annually deposited more than 200,000 yuan.

"Clearly, women control the money in most Chinese families. So, we thought we needed to provide new services specifically for that large portion of our customers," she said, adding that male customers would not be turned away.

The bank offers five categories of its "butterfly financing services" aimed at different age groups within its female customer base. The "pink butterfly" service, meant for unmarried women between 18 and 30, included credit cards, e-banking and other modern financing products to appeal to customers more interested in consumption than investment, Huang said.

Women's banks are not entirely new in China, as similar businesses staffed completely by women, from managers to guards, were previously set up in Shenzhen and Changsha, Hunan Province. However, after receiving an initial rush of attention, all those business ended up folding.

"Former women's banks put too much emphasis on form, which is not the point. We will attract customers with our content," said Wang Guangyu, financial manager of Bank of Beijing's women's bank. "That is why we can boast of being the first real women's bank in China."

Since the bank opened last week, it has succeeded in attracting over 100 high-end customers. But some experts have criticized the bank for elitism in targeting its services at mostly wealthy women.



Artist Han Meilin says the forgery of his work *Eight Horses* is one of several fakes auctioned by Beijing Rongbao Auction Co.

Artist Gets Forgery Pulled from Auction Block

By Lu Xiaonan

A forgery of a painting by renowned artist Han Meilin was deleted from an Internet-posted list of items up for auction by a local company last Saturday, one day before it would have been put on sale at Beijing's Asia Hotel.

Han himself found the fake painting and pressed Beijing Rongbao Auction Co. to take it off the auction block.

"I hope Beijing Rongbao will identify the supplier of the counterfeit work before Friday so we can settle this problem together. Otherwise, I will pursue the matter through legal means," Han said in a letter written to the company on Wednesday.

In the letter, shown to *Beijing Today* by Han's lawyer Chen Lihua on Wednesday, Han also accused the company of auctioning off 12 forgeries of his works last year.

"To date, the company has refused to disclose any information about the supplier of the fake paintings," Chen said.

Beijing Rongbao vice general manager Wang Wei told *Beijing Today*, "We cannot disclose information on the seller unless ordered to by a court. Such private information is protected by the Auction Law of People's Republic of China."

"But we did stop the sale of this painting."

Wang said his company had received Wang's letter and arranged to have a meeting over the matter. "According to auction laws, even if we did auction counterfeit works, we have not done anything illegal," he said.

Red Devils on the Doorstep

By Pan Hao

Legendary British football club Manchester United will make their Beijing debut this summer with a game against the home Hyundai side on July 26 at Worker's Stadium.

The match will be the second, following a game against Hong Kong in Hong Kong, in the Red Devils' Asia Tour. After playing in China, Manchester United will move on to Japan for two more matches.

"We will bring our full squad of players, subject to injury," promised Andy Anson, the commercial director of Manchester United Football Club, at a Tuesday press conference at the Kerry Centre Hotel.

The event was also attended by Zhang Xigang, vice president of the Beijing Football Association and Zhang Lu, vice president of Beijing Guoan Football Club Co.

China Questions Death Penalty



Photo by Jessy Leigh

By Wang Fang

Powerful arguments over the possibility of abolishing the death penalty in China have been voiced following the academic conference "the International Symposium on the Death Penalty" held last month at Xiangtan in Hunan province.

Legal experts at the conference argued that China would need to limit the use of capital punishment when it ratifies the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and that abolition was the mark of a "civilized society".

Professor Qiu Xinglong, the dean of the law faculty in Xiangtan University, Hunan Province and a leading advocate for reforming the current death penalty in China, claimed that as long as the law recognized that criminals were humans, the criminals were entitled to live and the state and the law could not deprive them of their right to life.

He also recalled why he decided to speak up for the abolition of the death penalty by recalling spending time seeing a condemned 18-year-old in prison.

"At seven on the last morning, he was eating with me. An hour later, he was on the execution field," he said. "From that moment on, I have been haunted by this question: why must we cruelly kill a fellow human being?"

In response, Zhang Jun, the deputy Minister of Justice, said the key issue in China regarding the death penalty is to reform the punishment system. He said the goal of the reform is to set up more long-term prison sentences of 20 to 30 years and thereby to reduce the use of the death penalty.

China uses the death penalty for a wide range of crimes, from murder to economic crimes such as corruption. In 2001, Amnesty International recorded more than 4,000

death sentences and nearly 2,500 executions in China.

Execution in China is usually carried out by a bullet to the head, and some provinces are experimenting with using lethal injections.

Since *Beijing News* published details of the conference on Monday, a wide and heated debate on whether to abolish capital punishment in China has taken place. It's a topic which has spread well beyond the legal profession.

Zhang Jun, deputy Minister of Justice: the most feasible way to reform the Chinese punishment system is to set up more long-term prison sentences

Chinese criminal law takes account of both cracking down on crime and maintaining human rights. The focus of reforming the punishment system is not to abolish the death penalty but to set up more long-term prison sentences, for example, 20 or 30 year sentences in order to reduce the use of the death penalty.

A survey by the Ministry of Justice last year found out that most serious criminals who were sentenced to life imprisonment actually stayed in prison only for 15 or 16 years before being released. My suggestion is to make sure they stay in prison for at least 25 years and then release them. A criminal who is released at 55 normally will not commit a new crime.

When the long-term imprisonment system is set up, judges will be less likely to resort to capital punishment. I think that in the future, if the criminal law is going to be amended, the legislature might remove capital punishment as an option in punishing certain crimes.

Xia Qingwen, commentator with Xinhua.net: now's not the time to abolish the death penalty

We cannot talk about the death penalty without understanding Chinese culture and

the present situation. The notion of "returning like for like" is rooted in China. The majority of the public could not accept that some murderers could go free after 10 years' imprisonment. Until Western ideas on human rights and life have been popularized in China, the abolition of the death penalty will not be supported.

The abolition of the death penalty would also result in a worsening public security environment. In fact, many countries have experienced a process of abolishing the death penalty and then bringing it back again. For example, some areas of the United States tried to abolish the death penalty in 1967. But 10 years later, the public pressured the government to bring it back after murder cases had increased dramatically.

Chantal Gill'ard, a Dutch citizen with Diaspora International in Rotterdam: the death penalty should be abolished

I think no man has rights above others, especially over their life. It is because the law, the judges and the judicial system can never be flawless. Many people are wrongly put on death row.

Further we are living in a racist world, where not all persons are treated equally. The best example is the US where in certain states, mainly the south, most people on death row are of black origin. So people do not necessarily bas their judgement on facts, sometimes they base their judgement on their experiences and ideas. This makes the judicial system somewhat fragile. We must acknowledge this and not apply the most extreme punishment.

Finally, I do not think punishment heals the wounds of the victims. I do not believe killing is the ideal punishment. There are alternatives.

Li Shu, cousin of a criminal

who was sentenced to death four years ago in Zhejiang Province: **it's hard to take the death but our family was able to cope**

My cousin was sentenced to death for rape, robbery and murder in Jinhua, Zhejiang Province in 2001. When he was alive, he caused a lot of troubles. As his relative, I felt that people looked down upon me. When he was sentenced to death, the atmosphere in our family was quite depressing, but we were not that sad. I did not worry about him any more and knew that most people would forget about him soon.

Still, his death left an everlasting pain in our family.

Dr. Liu Renwen, researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: the death penalty has a number of side effects

The worst side effect of China's death penalty is that it is an obstacle to international and regional criminal judicial administration and cooperation. At present, the European Commission and some countries which have abolished the death penalty forbid the extradition of criminals to their home countries if they would face the death penalty there. For instance, Chinese smuggler Lai Changxing fled to Canada. Since he would be sentenced to death if he was delivered back here, Canada has refused to extradite him.

Chen Xingliang, professor at Beijing University: the death penalty should be abolished but it does not mean that we can abolish it tomorrow

The abolition of the death penalty is dependent on two conditions, the material civilization and the spiritual civilization. When social productivity is improved, the country will be able to sustain the cost of long-term imprisonment. Spiritual civilization refers to a society that knows it is their duty to obey the law, so that the death penalty is no longer a necessary deterrent.

By Liu Zhaoxi

Shopping at the Beijing Sam's Club membership store, part of the Wal-Mart multinational empire, is very much like shopping at other large supermarkets like Carrefour. But there is at least one difference. At every cashier counter at the shop, located off the west fifth ring road, there is a small transparent frame with a five-yuan bill inserted, and a note: "Did our cashiers greet and thank you? No? Please take it," referring to the five-yuan bill.

"This is an encouragement for us," Yang Limei, a cashier at the store told *Beijing Today*.

Customers are free to take the money if they are not satisfied with the service, Ma Ning, public relations manager of the Wal-Mart North China branch, told *Beijing Today*. When store managers find the money gone during routine inspections, they will provide extra directions to the cashier who lost the bill to help him or her improve their services. Then another bill will be put back into the frame and all the costs are on the store, not individual clerks, Ma said.

Last year, the Wal-Mart chain in China introduced this practice from its mother company in the US and car-

of Business: **competition is harsh and businesses are trying all means to succeed**

I think this practice has little meaning. It's just a gag. Service quality cannot be taken care of by five yuan. On the other hand, I don't care that much whether the clerk said hello to me, so long as the overall service is excellent. I'd rather they let me wait for a shorter time in the line. Now the competition is very harsh and businesses are trying anything they can think of. Besides, I don't think it's a very good idea to offer cash.

Mr. Wang, Sam's Club member: it's a good move

It works. It helps to improve the service quality, urging the cashiers to be more polite.

Ba Xueyan, store clerk: store clerks are supposed to greet and thank customers anyway

The cashier does not greet me so I take the money? I think it is pointless. To work in the service sector, whether a cashier or a clerk or whatever, the first thing you should say to customers upon meeting them is to greet them, and thank them after they make the payments. These are assumed. Even on the street, if you let people go first, they will thank you for that, right?

Xian Tian, bank staff: I'm

Service With a Smile, Probably

ried it out throughout its stores in China, Ma said. *Changchun Evening News*, for example, reported last week that at a Wal-Mart super center in Changchun, capital of Jilin Province, bills were folded behind a yellow card worn by the cashiers and other clerks. The words printed on the card said: "if I did not say hello to you or did not provide you with high quality service at Wal-Mart, the money is yours."

Wal-Mart came to China in 1996 and runs 34 stores across the nation. Currently there is only one Sam's Club in Beijing, which opened in July 2003. Ma Ning said the chain would continue this cash reward, an idea about which *Beijing Today* discovered various different opinions.

Ma Ning, public relations manager at Wal-Mart: it's a demonstration of company culture

We do this to demonstrate our promises to our customers, and to show our respect for them. It is in accordance with our company culture of respecting individuals, serving customers and pursuing excellence.

Li Zheng, cashier at Beijing Sam's Club: symbol of members' value

This is to demonstrate the value of our members, to make them feel important. Sam's Club stands by its reputation and high quality service; otherwise people won't become members. As for greeting and thanking customers, it will become a habit after working here for a long time.

Lu Yilin, professor at Renmin University of China, School

against this practice

Such an incentive will not work. It's useless. I work at a bank. I think if I put five dollars on the counter and urge my staff to serve with a smile, that's just not how things will work. Still, there will be somebody who performs in their own way. For general Chinese people, who would go ahead and take the money? They don't bother. I don't know where Sam's Club got this idea. We educate our staff to serve customers from their heart and work so they deserve their salary, not by showing off like this.

Max Ma, college student: other stores could draw on this practice

I think it's a method for customers to supervise cashiers' service. I don't think there is good or bad about it. It may be just part of the management system of this store. Other stores could draw on this practice. I don't think it would do any harm if other businesses copied this measure. Would it work? Well, sometimes, maybe. But if things get busy, the cashier might forget to thank customers. If that happens to me I don't take it too seriously. I just walk away.

Rebekah Thomure, Sam's Club member in the US: it is one dollar in America

In the US, Sam's has \$1 that you can take, but only if they forget to thank you, by name. I believe they think it makes their services more personal. I have never been able to take a dollar myself, because they never have failed to thank me, with my name.



Photo by Li Shuzhuan

"There are a lot of different reasons why people are participating in this action. Mostly it's a lot of people who feel that George Bush has turned his back on them for a variety of reasons: Iraq, health care, Social Security, educational reform issues," said **Jet Heiko, national organizer for the volunteer group that calls itself Turn Your Back on Bush, about George W. Bush's second inauguration as the president of the**

Untied States on Thursday.

"I just hope our government can get them out safely. I'm so worried," *the weeping mother of hostage Zhou Sunqin said on Thursday. Iraqi insurgents released a video on Tuesday of eight Chinese hostages in Iraq and threatened to kill them in 48 hours unless the Beijing government clarified their role in the country.*

"It was the beginning of a tipping point. We are no longer

asking the question of whether or not the market share of Internet advertising will increase - the issue is how quickly," *said Dan Rosensweig, Yahoo Chief Operating Officer. Yahoo Inc.,*

The California-based company operating the world's most popular Internet destination, said Tuesday it earned \$373 million, or 25 cents per share, for the three months ended December 31.

"The most compelling and lucrative mobile content will continue to revolve around phone personalization, such as ring tones, real tones, wallpapers and basic games," *said Deloitte and Touche. The consulting firm said on Tuesday the global mobile phone market is set to grow to 2 billion subscribers by the end of 2005, fuelled by strong demand from developing economies in Asia and Latin America.*

Painful Changes

China's transformation putting people under heavy pressure

By Dong Nan

China is undergoing an unprecedented transformation as it shifts from a planned to a market-oriented economy, fueling an incredible development and modernization drive. Despite improvement in living quality experienced by many Chinese people, the vastness of the national change is giving rise to whole new kinds of stresses and worries.

A survey released earlier this month by a research group led by Chen Long of the Institute of Psychology under the China Academy of Sciences pinpoints some of the pressures bearing down on different sections of China's population at this critical turning point in the country's history.

The research project began at Kailuan Coal Mine, one of China's longest running state-owned enterprises. After conducting 46 group discussions and many case studies and interviews, Chen and his assistants gathered surveyed around 2,000 people, who listed 8,545 kinds of stress and troubles.

In the years that followed, Chen and his group classified those stresses into 10 categories, namely social environment, work, individual development, economic income, social relationships, social support, family, housing, offspring and personal life, and applied them to another survey given to 7,999 people from around China.

"In this period of societal transformation, we must pay as much attention to people's mental health and individuals' complete development as we do economic development," Chen told *Beijing Today*. "Our research was intended to determine the types of stresses faced by people of different social backgrounds, professions, ages and so on."

Sign o' the times

In the era of moving towards a market-oriented economy, the most common stresses faced by people related to social environments, work and individual development, the report shows.

Chen said social environment stresses mainly came from feelings of insecurity about the future of society and economic development. Concerns in this category, as revealed by the survey, are social morality, welfare, stability and economic disparity.

Working pressures come from worries about fulfilling tasks, tensions from work, excessive responsibility and competition, the report states. Chen said it was a direct result of the move towards the market and a meritocracy system that put employees into direct competition. Labor and medical care disputes had also been created by the reform of China's welfare system, he said.

In the realm of individual development, stresses come from wages, job achievement and career development. Chen said people were becoming more grounded in assessing their development, which reflected the improvement of society. The survey also found that many people, particularly those with high educations, felt heavy pressure to constantly expand their knowledge and improve their professional skills.

Alices in Wonderland

The survey found that unlike in many developed countries, the age group most under pressure in China were people between 20 and 30.

They were followed by people

51 to 60 and then 31 to 40.

Chen explained that modern psychology held that an individual's values are formed before he or she is 13 years old. Therefore, the generation 20 to 30 years old at the time of the survey formed their personalities and values at the end of the Cultural Revolution, a time when education had strongly moral, idealistic tones and China remained under a planned economy.

When that generation was ready to leave school and enter the work world, however, China lurched towards a more efficient, market-oriented economy. Young people suddenly felt lost and struggled to adjust their ideas to reality. They were thrust into ruthless competition and all kinds of modern stresses related to marriage and children, buying homes and economically supporting their families, as well as basic social communication.

The fact that most people of that generation were only children, coddled since childhood, led them to have communication problems and feelings of lacking support previously provided by siblings, Chen said.

"Another problem of this group of people is that they regularly face an overload of information," he said. "When they enter society, it's like Alice stepping into Wonderland."

In developed countries, the age group normally reported to be most under stress is those aged 30 to 40, Chen said.

Education

The better people are educated, the more pressure they face, according to the survey.

The report uses a point system for evaluating stress. The results show people with only primary school education (six years education) showed 55 stress points, people with junior middle school education got 59 points, people

Top 10 Stresses of 10 Professions

	Enterprise managers	Mid-level managers	Technicians	Miners	Workers	Community service workers	Teachers	Doctors and nurses	Other service workers	Laid-off workers
Social environment	3	1	5	9	8	10	6	4	2	7
Work	1	2	6	5	10	9	8	3	4	7
Individual development	5	1	3	7	9	10	8	2	4	6
Economic income	10	4	5	9	7	2	3	8	6	1
Social relationships	6	2	5	8	9	10	7	3	4	1
Social supports	3	1	4	6	8	7	5	2	9	10
Family	1	4	5	6	9	7	2	3	10	8
Housing	2	4	5	1	3	6	1	9	10	8
Offspring	5	3	8	2	9	6	1	4	10	7
Personal life	3	4	5	2	8	7	1	3	10	9

with senior middle school education had 67 points, people with technical secondary school education (technical education for 16 - 18) posted 76 points, people with two-year college education got 77, people with college education 79 and for people with post-graduate education 91.

Chen gave two reasons for the education-stress connection. First, he said, people who received higher educations tended to be more sensitive and had greater need for feelings of stability, recognition and achievement. As a result, a person with higher education would feel more stress in any given situation than someone with less schooling. Second, people with high levels of education tended to have positions of greater responsibility, naturally giving them more to worry about and leading to more complicated social relations.

Stress across 10 professions

The survey classified respon-



The age group most under pressure in China is people between 20 and 30.

Photos by Li Shuzhuang



The accelerating pace of life around the country is putting people under unprecedented pressure.

dents into 10 basic professions - enterprise managers, mid-level managers, technicians, miners, workers, community service workers, teachers, doctors and nurses, other service workers and laid-off workers - and found stress levels differed greatly between the groups.

Among enterprise managers, the main sources of stress were work and family, a function of their roles as the heads and faces of their companies and their having to stay long hours at the job away from home. For them, income was generally not an issue. Social environments, individual development and social support were the primary stress points for mid-level managers, more than housing, family or economics.

Technicians showed similar areas of concern and relatively little worry about raising children. Chen explained that many technicians were young people shortly out of college, so they naturally were

more focused on personal achievement than starting a family.

Miners' greatest concerns were caring for their families, their personal lives and housing, more than income or social matters. Chen said the group was made up of laborers with lower educations and they cared most about family. Moreover, though many miners make more than other workers, they still struggle to pay to put their children through school and put a roof over their heads.

Other workers worried about income and housing problems, but showed little stress from work. Community service workers cared about housing, offspring and personal life most, while they did not show as much concern for individual development and career.

The near opposite was true for teachers, who worried about individual development and social support most. Chen said that in recent years, as people nationwide have started paying more

Housing Prices Reach Seven-Year Peak

By Wang Fang

The average price of commercial housing in the capital hit a seven-year peak last year, a report on the local real estate market in 2004 released by the Beijing Statistics Bureau last Saturday shows.

The report says the average sale price of housing in Beijing grew 3.7 percent from 2003, and posted rises in every quarter, particularly in the fourth, when it shot up 6.3 percent. That growth represented the highest in seven years.

Average commercial residential housing prices rose 4.3 percent in 2004 from 2003, compared to 5.2 percent for common housing and 1.7 percent for luxury residences. Non-residential commercial housing increased 1.2 percent year-on-year.

The Statistics Bureau attributed the rising prices to three factors. First, the exchange price of land jumped 2.5 percent in 2004 due to the acceleration of Beijing's urbanization.

Second, the threshold for establishing new real estate developments and companies has been raised. The State Council issued new laws last year requiring real estate companies to increase their capital ratio of investing assets to 35 percent from 20 percent.

Lastly, the commercial housing market was becoming more diversified, attracting different kinds of Chinese and foreign consumers. Moreover, the ratio of commercial housing purchased by non-Beijing residents was increasing.

Drop-out Rates Rising in Rural Areas

By Dong Nan

The number of students dropping out of schools in China's rural areas is rising as a result of parents' inability to afford tuition, a survey released this month by the Central Chinese Communist Party School said. The report concluded that the country was far from realizing the goal of putting all children through nine years of compulsory education.

This report was based on an investigation of the state of compulsory education in rural areas of 16 provinces and regions, including Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Guangxi.

In 2000, the Chinese government announced that the popularization of the nine-year compulsory education scheme had been basically accomplished, but the report found that was not yet true in the countryside.

The initial "basic popularization" claim said that 85 percent of areas nationwide met the nine-year standard and that the remaining 15 percent of areas were mainly poor parts of western China.

However, even in areas considered above the bar for compulsory education in 2000 were found to have more students dropping out by the recent survey. In the past three years, the rate among junior high school students in particular has jumped to as much as 10 percent.

The report showed that many people in the countryside were simply not able to afford the costs of their children's educations. Though compulsory education is supposed to be free, schools are allowed to charge "incidental expenses."

Educational funding was limited in rural areas, the report pointed out, making it hard for schools to cover their operational costs. That has led to sorry conditions at many school houses, while putting schools into debt and leading them to default on teacher payments. The low quality of teaching and teachers in rural areas was another major problem, the report said.

Yang Jin, vice manager of the Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education made a statement this week to say the report showed the actual conditions in rural areas and promised the ministry would send experts to conduct more investigations in conjunction with the Central Chinese Communist Party School.



Rural parents cannot afford school fees, rural schools cannot afford lights.

Photo by Cong Feng



Polluting Enterprise Supported by Local Official

Polluting chromate factory in northwestern China defies orders to shut down

By Wang Fang

A chromate factory in Huangzhong County in Xining, Qinghai Province, northwestern China was closed due to the pollution it was causing in May 2004. However, it started running again two months later without passing the required environmental assessment, Xinhua reported.

The Yellow River, Yangtze River and Lancang River (upper Mekong) all originate in the Qinghai plateau, so this province is often described as "China's cistern". Environmental protection has become an increasingly important issue in the area.

However, Huangzhong Chromate Factory's plan to renovate its workshop and expand production was introduced at the Qinghai Business Negotiation Fair in July 2004, even though the fair claimed to "refuse any business related to environmental pollution." What is more surprising is that the project was included in the trade fair thanks to the director of Huangzhong environmental protection bureau.

Factory shut down

Huangzhong Chromate Factory has been required to stop production twice in recent years, first in 2002 and again in 2004, due to its pollution.

The factory was established in Huangzhong County in 1984, its main business being the production of sodium bichromate. Xinhua found out that for each ton of its product, there was between 2.5 and 3 tons of waste residue containing chromate, a poisonous carcinogenic element.

In the past twenty years, the factory has not built any environmental protection facilities and the waste residues have simply been discharged directly into the environment, seriously polluting the nearby groundwater.

In 2002, the factory applied for permission to renovate its workshop and expand production. However, experts in Qinghai Province who specialize in environmental protection were concerned after they examined the factory. Their conclusion was that the factory had caused terrible pollution to the local environment, so the factory was requested to stop production by Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau, Xinhua reported.

At the beginning of 2004, without getting any authorization form Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau, Huangzhong County government secretly allowed the facto-

ry to resume production.

In May 2004, during the environmental protection inspection carried out by Qinghai provincial government, the factory was ordered to build facilities to reduce pollution. The factory claimed it did not have enough funds to build the required facilities so it was shut down again.

Coming back again

Once again, the factory reopened and resumed production two months after being shut down for the second time. The factory's plans for the workshop renovation project were also taken up by the director of Huangzhong County Environmental Protection Bureau.

During the Qinghai Business Negotiation Fair held in July 2004, Huangzhong Chromate Factory was purchased by Changsha Hongsheng Chemical Products Company, a Hunan-based company. The factory was re-named Huangzhong Xinfai Chemical Product Company. Without passing any environmental assessments, the factory began its renovation project and continued to produce sodium bichromate.

Now the new workshops of Huangzhong Xinfai Chemical Product Company have been completed, according to Xinhua. Piles of yellowish and greenish chromate are stored outside the workshop. The workers told Xinhua that the factory had bought more than one hundred tons of chromate as raw material.

Wu Yishan, the environmental protection section chief of Huangzhong Xinfai Chemical Product Company told Xinhua, "The Company has invested more than 14 million yuan in the renovation project and purchase of raw materials."

The head of the Company, Qi Ganhui, spoke to Xinhua on the phone and denied that any production of sodium bichromate was taking place. He said that renovation of the workshop was the only current activity. He also emphasized that the renovation project had been introduced at the Qinghai Business Negotiation Fair. "Zhao Shengsheng, the director of Huangzhong County Environmental Protection Bureau signed our contract," Qi said.

Who will take responsibility?

Beijing Today has been calling Zhao Shengsheng's mobile since Tuesday but he hasn't answered.

The staff in the administrative office of Huangzhong

County Environmental Protection Bureau told *Beijing Today* that the signing of the contract was carried out by the director and the bureau could not provide any details. They advised calling the county government since it was responsible for business projects.

However, the member of staff in the administrative office of Huangzhong County government, who refused to give his name, told *Beijing Today*, "We are not clear about the whole thing. Ask the environmental protection bureau. They know more about it than us."

Illegal renovation and production

According to the Notice on Strengthening the Prevention of Chromate-containing Pollutants issued by the State Environmental Protection Bureau in August 2003, the renovation project conducted by Huangzhong Xinfai Chemical Product Company was illegal.

The notice stipulated that "renovation projects and expansion of chromate production lines should be registered with

since the opening of the chromate factory. Before 1984, the yield of wheat from one mu, (roughly 666 square meters), was about 400 kilograms. However, now the yield of wheat from the same area is less than 200 kilograms. The trees in the village are dying and livestock are sick."

Xie Wenshan, another villager showed Xinhua the scars on his hands. "When it rains, the puddles are yellowish. Last time, I happened to touch the water in a puddle and my hands were burnt."

Xie told Xinhua that the groundwater and water from Xiaonanchuan River, which passes through the village, was no longer drinkable. "A villager dug a well more than 10 meters deep and found the water was still quite yellowish," he said.

Xie also told *Beijing Today* that the Xiaonanchuan River was a branch of Huangshui River which passes through Xining, so the chromate is also endangering the groundwater in Qinghai's capital city.

The chromate content in the groundwater in Xiejia Village is



The place where Huangzhong Chromate Factory stores the residues containing chromate. Xinhua Photos

the State Environmental Protection Bureau and such renovation projects cannot be operated before receiving approval."

Ding Xuegang, the vice-director of Qinghai Academy of Environmental Science told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that the factory had not passed the environmental assessments in 2002 and it had not applied for assessment under its new name. "We found out that the factory did not have any devices to reduce the chromate content in its waste residues," he added.

Pollution caused to the local environment

The factory is located in Xiejia Village. 52-year-old villager Wei Yuzhang told Xinhua, "Life has become difficult and dangerous

15 to 135 times the standard level, Xinhua reported.

When will the factory be closed for good?

One villager in Xiejia Village told Xinhua, "Living in the village is like killing ourselves slowly."

Li Ling, the vice section chief for supervision and inspection with Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday, "The incident has aroused attention from the State Environmental Protection Bureau and they have started an investigation. Since the work has not been finished, I cannot release any information."

When she was asked when the investigation would be finished, she said, "I don't know."

China's Largest Porn Website Cracked by Cops

By Liu Zhaoxi

Seeing four strange men waiting outside her home after she opened the door to go to work, the young woman was puzzled. "What are you doing here?" she asked. "Police. Is Zhao Yan home?" One man replied, showing her his police ID. She realized these officers were at her doorstep to look for her husband, who was still in bed after being up late surfing the internet.

At 10:30am on December 8 last year, Zhao was arrested in Langfang, Hebei Province. His wife did not know that her husband was involved in running a pornography website, named 99bbs, which had over 300,000 members and a large network running the site.

Investigation

99bbs is the largest Chinese porn website to be shut down by police so far, having the largest body of registered members and administrators. It was also the first case in China where a porn site was located on a foreign server but mostly run by local people, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The site was started in 2002 by a 19-year-old Chinese boy in the US, who named himself "player" on the web.

It provided porn content for free at first, and began to charge money after receiving more clicks. Last summer, when a nationwide campaign against porn websites was underway and most domestically created ones were shut down, 99bbs was recruiting more members. In September, the site was discovered by police after a tip

off to the public security bureau in Tianjin. The police then discovered that the website had opened an account to receive payments at a bank in Hefei, capital of Anhui province, and the account owner lived in the city. The case therefore was transferred to Anhui Public Security Department.

Anhui police soon set up an investigation team. Scores of computers were stacked in two offices, and more than 20 policemen worked on the case in shifts twenty-four hours a day for months. To collect and save evidence of online crime was no easy task, and it is even more difficult to identify suspects from the world of virtual reality on the Internet. Strict disciplines also needed to be implemented to prevent officers from giving in to any temptations while working on the case. Online investigation was only carried out when there were at least two officers working together, according to sources at Anhui police department.

Closing the net

By the end of November 2004, investigators had collected evidence saved on 20 hard disks, outlining the entire network of the porn website.

Police found the site had a system mimicking the structure of a school. "Player," the creator of the site, acted as the principal. Other managers and administrators, most of them in China, were named "dean" or "class adviser." The members became "students," ranging from grade one to doctoral student according to the duration of their membership. This was designed to appeal to teenagers, who made up most of the 300,000 registered "students" of the website, according to Xinhua News Agency.

More than 40 deans and advisers worked for the site in 18 different regions all over China, providing porn movies, pictures and articles as well as prostitution information in different cities, Xinhua said. They did not necessarily know one another; most only communicated

through the website, according to sources from Anhui police.

Ten major figures, who were deans or of higher positions and in charge of different sections, were identified. The police also obtained their names and addresses and located them in 10 different provinces. Taking into account that the arrest of one of them could soon be known to others via the Internet, Anhui police department decided to arrest all of them at the same time. On December 7, ten teams dispatched from the Anhui police department arrived at their destinations. At 10am the next morning, they moved in for the arrest upon the order of the Anhui headquarters.

By the end of that day, nine of the suspects had been arrested, except Sun Zong in Jiangsu. Two days later, Sun was caught when he returned home, having been hiding for two days upon learning that police were looking for him.

Two more senior staff members of the network were caught by the end of 2004. Without maintenance and updating, 99bbs was shut down.

What made them do it?

Li, a teenager in Hefei, started by viewing and downloading from 99bbs. He then created his own site to transmit porn content, with 99bbs as one of his major sources for content. He also recruited members and charged each of them a 10 yuan registration fee, earning 17,000 yuan in total. He has been sentenced to jail for six years, sources at Anhui police said.

Suspects in the 99bbs case also included students, teachers and public officials. Why did these people run such a porn website? By charging money for viewing or registering, a porn site with about 5000 viewers can make more than 100,000 yuan per month, and 99bbs sometimes had more than 15,000 viewers every ten minutes, Xinhua said.

Closer contact with the suspects revealed there was more to it than the desire to make money. Shao, 28, whose first name was not given, was the only female suspect arrested. She had been the domestic "principal" of the website for about a month by the time of her arrest. Her husband was constantly away from home making a living by driving a taxi. Going online was a way for her to kill time and one day early last year, she encountered 99bbs and registered as a member. Soon she became one of the site administrators.

In the following months, it became a full time occupation for her. She devoted herself to the website, writing porn articles and even posting naked pictures of herself on the site.

Shi Xinghua, a "dean" of the site, was a computer major graduate and worked as an administrator, while earning 7,000 yuan per month working for an auto company. Like Shao, he participated in running the porn site more for enjoyment than for money.

Bai Jianjun, law professor at Peking University told *Beijing Today* that although there are no specific laws governing online porn crime in China, there are items in the law addressing producing, duplicating, publishing and spreading pornography.

Vice director of Anhui Public Security Department Wang Jing told Xinhua that through destroying domestic maintenance systems, China's police are able to shut down porn sites that use foreign servers, such as 99bbs.

(Additional information provided by Guan Qing, a member of the Anhui police publicity department)

Breast Defence

By Zhang Huan

As Ye Danyang walks towards us, the 38-year-old documentary director sees our photographer getting ready. Her first words are: "you should have told me that you were going to take some photos; I would have made up a little bit and worn something more beautiful."

There is no hint that she was a breast cancer patient two years ago and had to have one quarter of her left breast removed. She turned the camera on herself soon after the operation and recorded her sufferings and fight against the disease. She also put down her experiences and feelings before and after the operation on paper, and published them on the internet.

"I hope that nobody sees me as a patient," she says. In fact, she is working even harder than she used to, to carry out the three plans she made on her hospital bed: first, to establish a website to help breast cancer patients deal with the disease; second, to interview breast cancer patients and record their stories in a book; third, to shoot a documentary TV series recording the lives of breast cancer patients. She gave her book and the documentary the same name: *Story of Breasts*.

A terrible shock

Ye noticed a lump on her left breast in October, 2001. Busy with her work and family, she did not pay much attention to it until March, 2002, when she finally had time to go to the hospital. She was diagnosed with breast cancer. As a mother of an 8-year-old boy, the first person she thought of after hearing the news was her son.

"I was worried that I might die and not be able to take care of him," Ye asked a doctor how long she was likely to live, and the answer was ten years. "I felt relieved after hearing the answer. My son was then eight years old. After ten years, he would be 18 and would be able to take care of himself," Ye says.

Ye was also worried about her own appearance. "I wanted to keep my breast. How can a woman be beautiful and confident without her breasts?" Though her husband suggested she have the whole breast removed, Ye decided to remove only one quarter of the left breast after a discussion with the doctor. Fortunately, the final result was positive and Ye's operation was successful.

On the second day after the operation, lying on her hospital bed, an idea suddenly came to Ye: to record the experience of a breast cancer patient. The motive to shoot came not only from her professional impulses but also another important reason.

"Before I was ill, I did not know about breast cancer, or about anyone who had suffered from it. I even delayed my treatment for half a year. If I had known anything about breast cancer, I would have gone to hospital as soon as possible, and it might have been a benign tumor which I could have had removed before it developed into cancer. But I did not know. Nobody told me. So I thought that if even I, a person working in the media, did not know about it, there must be many women who do not know anything about breast cancer.

I thought that if even I, a person working in the media, did not know about it, there must be many women who do not know anything about breast cancer. So I should tell them."



Ye begins shooting her documentary.

Photo provided by Ye Danyang

So I should tell them."

With the help of her colleagues and her husband, Ye began shooting the process of her treatment two weeks after her operation. All the details of her life, her sufferings and recovery were meticulously recorded.

Fourteen days into her chemotherapy treatment, Ye began losing her hair, along with her eyebrows and eyelashes. For an elegant woman, this was an embarrassing, torturous process. "I stood before the mirror, and combed the hair with the softest touch. I was afraid that all the hair would come off if I put any force into it. Even the softest touch could make a lock of hair drop. My scalp did not ache but my heart ached." Ye's husband shot the scene.

Following her colleague's suggestion, Ye decided to have her

hair shaved. She asked her colleague to do the shooting. "The hairdresser was very considerate. He covered my forehead with one hand when shaving my head so that I wouldn't see the shaven half." Suddenly Yan Yun, Ye's colleague stopped shooting and said to her, "I can't continue shooting. It's too cruel." She walked away and began to cry. "This was the first time I had seen her cry," says Ye. "Her tears drew forth my tears and everyone in the salon held their breath. The hairdresser quietly shaved all my hair and handed me tissues to wipe away my tears."

Motive and pressure

Now Ye has largely recovered from her disease. The emphasis of her life has turned to other breast cancer patients. Among her three plans, the most diffi-

cult one is the shooting of the documentary. "It is very difficult to find a patient who is willing to be filmed. Sometimes the patient would agree but her husband or other relatives would disagree. There are many times when an appointment has already been made and I was just about to set off when suddenly the patient called me and told me her family disagreed with the idea." Ye says she can understand the attitude, and says that she does not push her potential interviewees.

The first breast cancer patient that Ye interviewed was a 35-year-old woman who had a 7-year-old son. She called Ye and talked about her condition. Her cancer had reached an advanced stage and she was in despair. On the phone, the patient couldn't help crying while



Photos by Xiang Li

speaking. "I was crying too, but I controlled myself so as not to let her hear," Ye says. "I knew I could do nothing for her but I told her I wanted to record what she was thinking and what she wanted to say to her son and her family. If the day came when she would leave the world, she could leave her words with her family and her son. Maybe that would be a comfort to them. And she told me she would like to do it."

However on the day when Ye and her colleague went to the patient's home, she had just finished an examination at the hospital and her family were all there. "The patient could not help crying when she saw me. She was very weak and had to sit or lie on the bed. When eating, she had to stop from time to time to take a rest. I saw a big mark on her neck, which was the result of radiotherapy," Ye paused for a while, looking out of the window. "I felt a pain in my heart. I knew she had suffered everything from chemotherapy to radiotherapy. She was really strong in mind, but still she couldn't change her fate."

But with so many family members there, Ye and the patient could not have a private talk. Ye only shot their meeting and her talking with her family. One month later, the patient died. Speaking of her death, Ye felt very regretful. "I did not help her fulfill her will. I should have had more time to film her, but I was really busy with my work at that time." After this incident, Ye asked to take leave from her job at Beijing TV so as to put all her time into her three plans.

The plans are Ye's concern, but also a source of pressure. She is working harder than she should. For a person who has undergone a breast operation, the five years after the operation is still a dangerous period. But Ye feels she has no other choice.

"I don't regard my illness as a misfortune," Ye says. "On the contrary, it was a good thing in disguise. What I got from the disease was something healthy people cannot know. My family gave me great support, especially my son. He knew I was sick and would try his best to take care of me. When we walked together, he held up my arm with all his effort. He would help me to lift the door curtain when going into a room. He would bend down to tie my shoelaces for me. His little hands did not have enough strength, so the laces always came loose after a while but he would bend down to tie them again. I told him to let Dad do it, but he insisted on doing it by himself," Ye smiles. "Not every mother can experience such a happiness."

Extracts from Ye's online narration of Story of Breasts.

By Ye Danyang, translated by Zhang Huan

In October 2001, a large lump appeared on my left breast. I went to see a doctor and was told that it came from proliferation of my mammary gland and wasn't a big problem. Due to my busy schedule both at home and at work, I didn't do anything.

Six months later when I had more free time, I consulted a specialist who found that the lump was a tumor. I was advised to have breast surgery right away to remove the tumor. 2002 was a very bad year for me.

It still makes me laugh when I revisit my very first thought after I was told that I might have breast cancer - I wanted money! A large amount of money which would help finance my son's life after I was gone. "I could sell my organs," I told my husband, "but nobody would buy them if I had cancer...maybe my body could still be donated for research. But there are so many people in this country and a lot of them die every day; who would buy this body of mine? Check this out with the doctor for me, okay?" I was murmuring to myself in my husband's arms, helpless and hopeless.

At that time, I felt as if I was suddenly thrown into in a totally strange place. Standing there alone, I was ignorant and at a loss what to do. I had lost control of my own future and all the hope I used to have vanished in a second.

I had never been afraid of death, but I wasn't willing to accept it at that time. My life is essential to the completeness of my family. I have responsibilities as a wife and a mother. I want my son to grow up in a family with two parents and I wouldn't want to see him live under the shadow of death or develop any pessimistic thoughts about life. I want my son always to have sunshine in his heart. For the sake of my son, I couldn't bear the idea of dying.

I was afraid of the loss of my breast and beauty as well. Breasts are very important to a woman. Can you imagine what would happen to a woman if she lost her breasts? Your husband would still love you, but it is you who wouldn't love yourself any longer. Gone with your breasts are your self-respect, confidence and love for life. To me, a body without breasts is a corpse. So I have to try my best to keep my breast.

My doctor listed the following four plans for the treatment, and I chose the second one.

1. Chemotherapy only and no surgery.

2. Removal of a quarter of the left breast and the lymph around the armpit plus chemotherapy.

3. Removal of half of the left breast and the lymph around the armpit plus chemotherapy.

4. Removal of the entire left breast and the lymph around the armpit plus chemotherapy.

My husband firmly disagreed with the first choice. He suggested the last option, which was the most radical but the safest, and he told me that he would still love me no matter what I had to lose. My reply was that I would keep my left breast for myself. The limit of my tolerance was a quarter of the breast. In fact, I had no idea what exactly it would mean if even just one quarter of it was to be cut off. I believed that I still had the right to make a choice that would maintain the completeness of my body.

Teach. What Conf Says

By Zhang Huan

If you ask a Chinese, "Do you know Confucius?" the answer will be, "Of course!" But if you ask someone to recite an article from one of the Confucian classics, very few would be able to comply.

What was once studied and memorized as a central component of education has been forgotten by most people today. The classical literary style, the concise but comprehensive expressions, together with the Confucian values behind them, no longer seem to touch the heart of the modern world.

When most people are embracing learning English and modernization, a small group of true believers are dedicating themselves to teaching the ancient Chinese classics to students in elementary and middle schools and universities.

A different living

It is not easy to find Yi Dan School, hidden away in a crowded and somewhat shabby courtyard in Chengzeyuan, near the west gate of Beijing University. Although no house number or board points the way, the name of the school is familiar to people living in the area.

Yi Dan School occupies only two rooms, in which five full-time administrative staff work. The actual teaching takes place in schools and universities. On the walls hang traditional paintings and calligraphy, with a portrait of Confucius teaching in a prominent position. Two large bookshelves filled with readings for children, Confucian classics and books of literature, history and philosophy stand against the wall.

"Everything you see in these rooms was donated by others," Pang Fei, the general secretary and founder of the organization told *Beijing Today*, "People sent us all kinds of things and gave a lot of help." In one corner, a big electric cooker contained a broth with Chinese cabbage and tofu. Tang Dingfeng, a staff member, said it was a feature dish of the school. The staff seldom eat meat, Pang explained, "On the one hand, we need to save money and on the other hand, a bland diet helps to have a quiet and peaceful heart."

The office staff all receive a stipend of 500 yuan per month, except Pang, who gets 600 yuan. They work from 8:30 in the morning till 8 or 9 at night, and rarely have weekends or holidays off.

"I spend almost all my time in the office," says Tang, who came to Beijing from Sichuan province after working as an



Pang Fei, founder of Yi Dan School.

Photos provided by Yi Dan School



Pang Fei conducts a class at Changfu Elementary School in 2001.

accountant for one year. By chance he saw a recruiting notice for Yi Dan School at Beijing University and came to take a look. "I think what they are doing is interesting and meaningful, so I stayed and now I've been working here for two years."

Asked why he chose to live such a plain life, Tang says, "I want to do what I really like before I get old and have many concerns. When I work here, I feel my soul and my body are unified. I am peaceful in mind."

Founding of Yi Dan School

Pang Fei graduated from the department of philosophy of Beijing University with a master's degree. "At that time, my thinking was to find another sincere life to communicate ideas. I hope to find a group of persons who have similar ideas with me."

On December 21, 2000, Pang put up notices in Beijing, Tsinghua and Renmin universities and at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, seeking worthy persons to go to elementary and middle schools to teach Chinese culture. To his surprise, within a week more than 30 M.A. and Ph.D. graduates had come to him and expressed enthusiasm for his plan.

Although at first Pang had difficulty convincing schools to

accept his offer to provide free classes, the headmaster of Chengfu Elementary School eventually accepted his idea and the first lesson began. "My way is to move them by my sincerity and convince them by reasoning things out," Pang said, "I started from their point of view and told them the learning of the ancient classics would improve children's quality in logic, imagination, language and morality. Besides, our teachers are all learned scholars and we don't charge."

Yi Dan School teaches elementary school students ancient children's readings like *The Book of Family Names*, extracts from *The Analects of Confucius* and some ancient poems and songs. The teaching method basically follows the ancient practice, with the emphasis on reading aloud, reciting and memorizing. The aim is to foster a sense of the language and a sense of context, and so further develop children affection and respect for the nation's history and culture.

In middle schools, lessons are given on the history of culture, the history of literature and the history of ideology. The emphasis is on introduction, explanation and practice.

In universities, the school invites well-known scholars and professors to give lectures and organize small

groups to study and discuss traditional culture.

Public benefit, culture and youth

Pang Fei says, "Our three guiding concepts are public benefit, culture and youth. Yi Dan School is first a public welfare organization. It is supported by donation and its aim is to serve the public." Since its founding, the school has enlisted more than 900 volunteers and received 250,000 yuan in donations.

"We want to create an atmosphere of public participation and public gain. Public welfare has two meaning: the first is to stand among the ordinary, help the ordinary and begin with the ordinary; the second is to be open, without conventions and taboos," Pang says.

Besides teaching in schools and giving lectures in universities, the school plans to set up classes in residential districts and involve more people in the study and discussion of traditional culture.

Despite going against the general trend of chasing profit, Pang Fei and his colleagues say they are busy and happy. "You cannot be anxious to seek quick success when building up a culture. It is developed during a long period, maybe three or five hundred years. The significance of culture lies in the future, not in the present," says Pang.

Six Major Digs of 2004

By Peng Juan

An Archeological Forum held last week, attended by some 100 archaeological experts and scholars, unveiled the list of the top archeological finds in China for 2004.

Six major digs were singled out from a list of over 1,000 new discoveries at the forum, which was organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Forerunner of ancient palaces

In July 2004, archaeologists discovered the remains of a palace at Erlitou, in Henan Province, which, with a history of more than 3,600 years, is claimed to be the earliest royal palace ever found in China.

Covering 108,000 square meters, the rectangular city is about 300 meters wide from east to west, and 360 meters long from north to south. The rammed earth wall was built along the inner sides of the four roads discovered at an earlier time, each 10 to 20 meters wide. The crisscross roads formed a transportation network in the central area of the palace. Important relics were also found such as wheel tracks, large rammed earth bases and turquoise-making workshops.

The structural remains and the roads show the palace city had a clear layout, which might have stood as the first example for the construction of later imperial palace cities. The discovery of small-sized two-wheeled tracks pushed back the appearance of two-wheeled vehicles in China to as early as the Xia Dynasty (2100-1600 BC).

Revealing Tang royal garden

The fairyland-like garden around the site of the Taiye Pool was discovered last year in the Daming Palace, initially confirming the sketchy historical record of the biggest imperial garden in the palace of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

Located in the northeast of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, the site unveiled the design of the Taiye Pool, which reflected Taoist thought. A series of excavations were made on the west, north and south bank and on what were small islets, producing a raft of important finds, such as the site of 400 winding corridors around the islets, waterside pavilions and banisters-supported buildings. A new islet was also discovered at the site.

The site furnishes substantial materials for the research of China's ancient capitals, ancient garden construction history and comparative studies of ancient gardens at home and abroad.

Glory of porcelain capital

A group of kiln sites of royal porcelain workshops of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) were excavated last October in Jingdezhen, a city renowned for its porcelain since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), in South China's Jiangxi Province. The site covered an area of 755 square meters, revealing a large quantity of broken porcelain that had failed to be selected for royal use.

A 10-centimeter-tall red glazed cup with a 16-centimeter mouth drew the attention of many archaeologists. The seal certifying the cup to have been made during the reign of Emperor Yongle written in *zhuan* style, a calligraphy style used for seals, is the most distinct ever found.

This is the largest group of kilns at an imperial site ever discovered in China. It provides valuable evidence for research on porcelain making skills at the imperial kilns in the Ming Dynasty.

Prehistoric village of Beifudi

A large Neolithic village that came to light last summer revealed the earthly and religious



Erlitou, Henan.

Photo provided by Peng Juan

lives of hunters and gatherers in China's northern plains some 7,000 to 8,000 years ago. Beifudi Neolithic Site covers more than 30,000 square meters in Yixian County, Hebei Province.

The well-preserved foundations of 10 houses indicate the villagers lived in "basements" with their houses built half into the ground. The properties of its early residents included quantities of earthenware – pots and vases. The most interesting were a dozen or so earthenware masks, resembling faces of people, monkeys and pigs, in sizes ranging from life size to 10 centimeter miniatures.

It is the first time pottery human masks have been found at a Neolithic site in China. The residential site, sacrificial site and pottery masks are of significant value in shedding light on early Neolithic culture in North China and the spiritual life of ancient people.

Ancient secrets in Liangzhu tombs

The Zhuangqiaofen site, dating back 4,000 to 5,300 years, lies 13 kilometers south-east of Pinghu, in Zhejiang Province. It is the largest tomb area ever found of the Neolithic Liangzhu Culture, containing 236 tombs in an area of 2,000 square meters, with 2,600 funerary objects ranging from pottery ware, stone implements, jade ornaments and bone objects.

One of the significant aspects of the find is that 162, or nearly two-thirds of the tombs were built on old ones that had been partly destroyed to make way for the new. The largest of these groups is composed of 10 tombs. The discovery is of great significance for studying settlement patterns during the Liangzhu Culture period.

The discovery of dog or pig pits at the site is also a first in China. Furthermore, a stone plough with a wooden base is the earliest of its kind ever found in China. With a length of 1.06 meters, the huge plough shows that dependence on such agricultural tools had reached a high level in the area at that time.

Mega stone storehouse

The ruins of three of three liked store houses, covering an area of more than 7,000 square meters, was found last May in Fengxiang County, some 300 kilometers west of Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.

Constructed in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC - 24 AD), the complex is believed to have had multiple uses, including storage, transportation and garrison. Around the peripheries of each are rammed soil platforms linking two buildings, on which were two north-south oriented passageways.

The discovery provides important material for the study of transportation, storage, arms and building technology in the Western Han Dynasty.

Although it has been described as equivalent in importance to that of the Yin Ruins at the beginning of 20th century, the discovery of the Temple of Duke Zhou in Shaanxi, which aroused unprecedented interest in archaeological circles at the end of last year, was not included among the 2004 Major Digs, due to the fact that it remains shrouded in mystery.

What's New

CD

Echoes: The Best of Pink Floyd

Echoes - The Best of Pink Floyd



By Tom Spearman

Most of us know Pink Floyd from their ground breaking, mega-selling albums such as *Dark Side of the Moon* and *The Wall*. But they'd been going for a good ten years before real success came along and many a fan has mined their earlier, more psychedelic albums only to discover that a lot of it is completely unlistenable. So that's where this album comes in handy. It's a late arrival in Beijing, having been released about three years ago, but now local Floyd fans can enjoy the pick of the band's earlier work, such as *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*, without having to sit through the whole of *Atom Heart Mother*. The album also includes *See Emily Play* and the awesome 16-minute *Echoes*.

DVD
Clean

There are two good reasons not to buy this DVD: one is that the version currently available in Beijing lacks English subtitles, which are necessary as the film is set in France, as well as Canada and London. The other is that the film is burdened with one of the worst scripts of recent years, full of characters whose apparent purpose is to state the completely obvious. The continuous flow of unbelievably banal lines becomes painful after five minutes, let alone nearly two hours. It's a shame because the director has somehow managed to assemble a terrific cast, including Maggie Cheung, Nick Nolte and Beatrice Dalle. Cheung makes for somewhat unlikely casting as a burnout heroin addict, blamed for the overdose death of her rock star husband and seeking to start a new life with her estranged son. She does incredibly well, showing off her fluent English and French, and it's certainly a brave choice of role. Nick Nolte is also believable as the forgiving father in law, but given the awful lines he has, it's hard to care.

Stage Beauty



It's frustrating when films that appear to have everything going for them don't really work. This film, made by Richard Eyre (one of Britain's finest and most respected directors), is based on a successful play, and boasts an excellent cast. And yet it's lacking something, a decent plot perhaps. The film is set in Restoration England, and fun loving King Charles II wants to spice up the theatre a bit so he declares an end to the law stating that women may not appear on stage. This comes as a blow for Edward Knyaston, played by the excellent Billy Crudup, who was the best known actor of female parts in England at the time. However, it's better news for his dresser, played by Claire Danes, who has acting ambitions of her own.

Another Breeze of Ethnic Arts



By Pan Hao

An ethnic extravaganza, or a fashion show? That was the question that Nanning Arts Theatre's new version of Beautiful Zhuang Brocade left the audience last Friday night at Beijing Exhibition Hall Theatre.

The original songs and dances have been adapted from the culture of ethnic minorities in Guangxi since 2003, and some improvements have been made over the years. The director was Din Wei, costume design was by A Kuan and stage and effects design was by Ju Yi. Obviously, this trio intended to make something fashionable based on an ethnic theme. The piece *Folk Drag the Moon Out* was a fine example to reinforce one of the selling points here, the beautifully made costumes which were altered with various modern touches, such as exaggerated shape and the usage of sparkling adornments. The long sky-blue skirt that singer Wei Yanyang wore was long enough to touch the floor and looked more luxurious than organic, and there was a strong sense that the designer had borrowed several things from *Romeo and Juliet*. She sang the song



both in the Dong people's language and mandarin. Wei Liping (of the Zhuang ethnic minority) performed the folk song *Meng Zhuang Xiang*. Her voice was superb and rich, and she sang the first part of the song in her home language. The melody was charming too. Surprisingly, she swapped to mandarin while she sang some parts of the song, and the difference in tonality could be heard due to the different pronunciation. Some purists will love the original dialect more, after all it's a more authentic match for the song.

The duo dance *Vine Climbs Tree and Tree Climbs Vine* by Li Jialin and Wei Qiang used the melody from the classic ethnic musical film *Sister Liu San*. The dance was arranged and composed in a manner similar to modern ballet with few ethnic bits remaining. Fortunately, the stage effects did produce a dream-like picture, on which the red leaves were flying in the air and surrounding



Photos by Tian Yufeng

the lovers.

In contrast, *Duo Duo Jiao (Stepping the foot)* was a lively Yi ethnic minority group dance. You could see the girls smoking pipes and the guys wearing their traditional skirts. Rhythm was the key factor of the dance, with the background music mainly played by percussion and the click of bamboo. This was closer to authentic ethnic music, so it was easy for the audience to form a mental image of how the Yi people express their joy.

Xiao Jianguang, the vice president of Nanning arts Theatre, said, "We made some innovational changes and used contemporary methods to express the ethnic songs and dance as well as the changing life there."

Li Jialin, one of the lead dancers said they only had a very short time to rehearse the performance before the show. "The director asked us to do some improvisation in the dance *Vine Climbs the Tree and Tree Climbs Vine*, so we got new things every time we practised it," she added.



Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

Good, but Not Great

By Jacqueline Yu

Better than nothing, is the judgement from Leslie Cheung fans after seeing *Eternal Leslie Cheung*. The musical was produced in April 2004 in order to celebrate the life of the Hong Kong singer and actor, who committed suicide on April 1 2003 by jumping from the 24th floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hong Kong.

Though some weren't happy with the show, fans of Cheung have shown up for every performance and kept crying out his name or "Ge-Ge" (big brother), a common term of affection that Cheung always liked.

The show features Banny Chen Zhipeng performing Cheung's most famous songs. Since his junior school days, Chen, a former member of pop group Xiao Hu Dui (Little Tigers), was always considered to resemble Leslie Cheung. He became a fan of the singer, and despite competition from other singers, he finally won the part of Leslie Cheung in this musical.

Chen did his best in leading

the audience into the dream that Cheung was still alive, singing Cheung's 20 most famous songs and wearing his familiar concert costumes, as well as mimicking his gestures and expressions. Every time he appeared on the stage there were cries and shouts from emotional fans, giving confidence to Chen, who is under a lot of pressure in taking this role.

Most criticism is aimed at the plot of the musical, which is based on a rather silly love story between a college girl and a young drama director, both fans of Leslie Cheung. This story is used to connect Chen's singing and dancing, but the links are ridiculous and even vulgar in places, and they crudely interrupt the emotional atmosphere that Chen labors so hard to build up.

No one really should be blamed. All the emotion for Leslie Cheung is real. After all, this was intended as a chance for fans to dream about their idol. The show concluded its run in Beijing at the Poly Plaza last Sunday.

It's a Celebration

By Wang Yao

It was the first anniversary of Pocket Music Magazine in the recently opened 13Club on Saturday afternoon, and eleven bands attended the party. The style ranged from electro, punk, and folk to gothic.

After adjusting their equipment, Panda Twin (Sun Dawei) and ShanShui Recording Company inaugurated the start of the party. Panda Twin used electro pieces to produce his melody, and was barely visible on stage. The electro rocker was young and his tunes were energetic, with a feeling like waves, high and low. The next band was Du Kun, a British-style band who performed all their songs in smooth English. Though they were somewhat lacking in refinement, their tunes were positive and popular with the audience. Their female drummer was also excellent, and looked terrific. Their new song *Guangde Temple* sounded like a mixture of Chinese Buddhist rhythms and English articulation. The female voice of Pity was clean and deep. SUBS then softly

prepared on the stage, with the audience baying for them to begin. Then, the music began and the audience started to scream. Boys and girls even stood on the tables to jump to the tune. After the intro, SUBS slipped into their crazy post-punk style. The desperation and hysteria of the female lead vocalist Kang Mao erupted the band's enthusiasm for pure punk energy. The bar was crowded with nearly 300 people, and the crowd got into their mosh action as SUBS belted out *Burning*, and *Single the Man*. One girl climbed on stage and then stage dived into the audience. This was the high point of the whole performance. Some punks did not like the band, saying they were exaggerated and empty, while some overseas listeners thought SUBS were terrific. To calm the crazy atmosphere, folk singer Zhou Yunpeng was next up on stage. He said nothing to introduce himself, but just started playing his guitar, a low pitched poet rather than a commercial musician. *Blue Tiger* was his first song and the audience were easily dragged from

the previous climax to this more poetic vibe. Zhou's voice was deep and nostalgic, and the crowd wanted an encore. Ruin, a veteran British-style band, appeared next. They've been playing in Beijing for years, and the lead vocalist Zhou Yunshan is famous for his skills and influence. As expected, the band performed some of their best-known works, including *Rootless Grass*, *Renowned in Shu Cun* and *Deceased in Placentas*, and *Rock Flower*. The music showed the band's maturity, especially the lyrics of *Rock Flower*. Some teenagers did not like the band but older audience members raised their hands to show their support. By now, the performance had lasted for six hours and the venue was still packed with fans, although next-up Shu, a folk singer, and Liang Shi, an electro band, were not so popular. However, Liang Shi's cute tune on *Keyboard* was impressive. People said they felt nostalgic for earlier days of electro music when they heard the song. Though Wang Juan and Xiao He were both folk singers, Wang Juan's refined voice gave a different sense from Xiao He's sneering feelings about contemporary life. Wang's lyrics maybe appealed more to women. Xiao He humorously sang his own songs and covered many classic hits. The final and long-awaited band MuMa drew a close to the day, performing their most popular songs. The bass was low, but the audience was into it.

After the show, Zhou Yunshan and Xie Qiang said that they hoped they could have more practice and improve their quality. They said they still had much to learn, even though their recording company appeared to be satisfied with their progress so far.



Kang Mao of SUBS

Photo by I-Neco

Talking jobs and corporate culture

Employment Prospects Going Up with OTIS



Otis, the largest elevator producer in the world, set foot in Shanghai as early as 100 years ago, when the first elevator appeared in China. Today, it has seven joint ventures and four manufacturing plants throughout the country.

Otis China's HR manager Ni Yunyi said the company is seeking hundreds of highly qualified professionals to join its current 6,000 employees in more than 30 branch companies in China, when she was chatting on www.54club.com recently with interested candidates.

Recruitment in 2005:

Q: Can you tell us your recruitment plans for 2005, particularly for new graduates?

Ni Yunyi: We started to recruit students directly from campus in 2003. In the first year, we hired 80 people, and 260 in the second year. This year, we will recruit at least 350 graduates. Our China headquarters is based in Tianjin. Students throughout the country can communicate with us during our campus tours to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xi'an and Hangzhou, usually in the last months of the year.

Q: What are the positions available?

Ni: We are looking for people in the areas of mechanical and electrical engineering, system mechanics, quality control, IT, as well as managers of marketing, sales service, purchasing and internal security. We also have vacancies in the departments of HR, accounting and external communications. You can find the positions at www.51job.com.

Q: What is the rate for granting interviews to applicants?

Ni: Last year, we received more than 10,000 applications. It was impossible to



Otis elevators are the only brand in the sports facilities of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games
Photo by Otis China

offer English tests and interviews for all of them, so we usually called a group of people at a time as we received resumes. Currently, all of my colleagues are in the different stages of recruiting new people. Next year, we plan to have some newly graduated students to help us during the recruitment process.

Never-give-up and teamwork:

Q: What are the company's selection standards?

Ni: We basically rely on two aspects: an attitude of never giving up and the spirit of teamwork. Most of the students asked me how many skills and certificates they need to possess. However, the most important thing is attitude. The company in China is developing rapidly every year, so we want our professionals to be active and creative in different positions and places.

Q: As an American company, how you develop your local employment plan?

Ni: As a matter of fact, one of our expectations is to make China a pool of the company's human resources all over the world. It means that we hope the employees in Otis China not only have the opportunity to transfer positions in the domestic market, but also could make achievements in

other branches throughout the world, such as Southeast Asia and the US.

Tips and advice:

Q: I am a newcomer to the working environment. Do you think my first job will affect me the most?

Ni: Of course, the first job is very important because it will become the foundation for the future career development. But it doesn't mean the first position. Entering into a new company, you will have chances to shift between departments and search for the field that you are interested in and good at.

Most of the students have great expectations of their first job upon graduation. In my opinion, they can first decide whether to be an expert in one particular area or to be a manager. Most of our new staff must work in the front line fixing or setting up elevators with our workers, because nothing can beat first hand experience when planning projects or negotiating contracts. Thus, maybe your first job starts with a technical position, but you just need to work on it.

Q: I have applied for several companies and discovered that it is hard to keep a balance between education and skills. What do you think?

Ni: Our president asked the students when he was giving the campus lectures whether they were fed up with study. If yes, sorry, OTIS is not for you. What I want to illustrate is that we just require the bachelor degree as a starting point and provide opportunities to learn. For instance, some of the employees of 2003 passed our English test and are applying for MBA courses that cooperate with a university in the US. Currently, 6 percent of our new staff are participating in such courses and we hope that 25 percent will get their master's degree by this means.

(Edited by Xie Lixue)

Beijing Hyundai Seeks 100 Grads

By Xie Lixue

Prospective graduates of 2005 will have an opportunity to join auto manufacturers Toyota and DaimlerChrysler when those two companies hold their campus tours at different universities. Now another big name, Hyundai, has released its latest recruitment information on its website, saying it will recruit nearly 100 graduates this July.

Of these, 66 with bachelor degrees are being sought, more than the number of masters in

the technology and executive areas. The available positions are for students who have majored in automobile engineering, heat energy and engine engineering, mechanical and automatic engineering, electrical and automatic engineering, material science and engineering, computer science, architecture, accounting, law, international economy and trade, sales and marketing, management and material management.

Students can send resumes to: hr@bhmc.com.cn.

English Tester Strives for Market Influence

By James Liu

United Education Ltd. (UEL), the exclusive distributor of the PhonePass SET test in China, is holding a Festivals in the World seminar this afternoon at the Jianguo Garden Hotel. More than 80 HR managers from renowned international and local enterprises are expected to join the event.

Claire Guo, chief representative of UEL's Beijing Office, told *Beijing Today*, "The aim of the event is to help HR people better understand Chinese and western festivals in order to avoid conflicts caused by different cultural backgrounds."

Next Friday, UEL will hold the second event in the series, with the theme Festival Shopping For Expatriates in Beijing, at China



Jared Berstein (left), founder of Ordinate/PhonePass SET, and Lionel Xu, UEL General Manager at a seminar in Tsinghua University last August
Photo by UEL

Merchants Tower.

Philips, 3M, Henkel, Samsung, and Nike are among the major companies that use the PhonePass SET test in assessing candidates English skills during the recruitment process and in employee English training.



Unemployment is becoming a headache for the local government with increasing immigration from the rural areas.
Photo by China News Service

Beijing to Curb High Unemployment Rate

By Xie Lixue

More than 779,000 people are competing for 493,000 jobs in 2005, according to the latest forecast by Beijing Municipal Labor and Social Security Bureau. The city's labor market watchdog released its latest labor market report on January 10. The figures indicate that approximately 286,000 will be unable to find jobs.

Structural unemployment

"It's a problem of structural unemployment," Meng Xian-cang, director of the bureau's employment department told *Beijing Youth Daily* Monday.

"Most of the unemployed lack basic skills and knowledge," he said, "This is a more serious problem than that of people immigrating from rural areas to the cities."

To solve the problem, more low-level positions need to be created, such as in community services, health care services, repair and maintenance services, individual households, and in particular, private businesses.

To encourage individuals to open their own private small businesses, the municipal government is preparing some 100 new projects, which are expected to create 2,000 jobs.

Middle-aged unemployment

Age is another major factor in the unemployment, according to Meng. Over 30 percent of the unemployed in Beijing are over 40. The total number is around 80,000.

To help these people find work, the government is planning to encourage residential

communities to create up to 50,000 jobs.

Area imbalance

Unemployment is also imbalanced among the capital's 18 districts and rural counties, due to their varying economic prosperity and dynamism.

The areas with rapid economic growth, such as the eastern and northern parts of Beijing, are hungry for both skilled and unskilled laborers, while in the less developed western and southern parts, such as the districts of Mentougou and Fangshan, unemployment rates are much higher.

With the approach of the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing is to kick off construction of the major venues this year. "This will also help a lot to ease the situation," Meng said.

Situations Vacant

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Seeking Employment

A self-motivated, patient, enthusiastic, active and diligent Beijing boy seeking a job as business interpreter, manager assistant, public relation representative, business service advisor, human resource official, office secretary.

Fluent English, excellent communication capability and command skills in computer.

Contact Yang Yang at: 13811243074

Email: ivan1339@sina.com

Chen Yurong, Ph.D of consuming psychology and master of economics, is looking for a better job.

Please visit my website at: www.chenyurong.com, or call me at: 010-6707 4612, 13651033853.

Female Beijinger, 39, is looking for a job and has a decade's experience in import-export business, human resources management, interpretation and secretarial work. I have a good command of computer skills and am good at English, both writing and speaking.

Mobile: 13611163663

Female Beijinger, 29, majored in accounting with Public Accountant Certification, fluent in English, both writing and speaking, is looking for a full-time job related to finance or part-time job related to English.

Tel: 8347-7009

E-mail: lily948@hotmail.com

A retired president and CEO of two Canadian companies interested in teaching English or French in China.

Cellphone: 1352 0549132

Email:

jeanguyfurois@aol.com

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com

Basic information:

What courses and subjects are the best or most reputable at your university? How many faculties do you have?

—qq860721

We have nine faculties: architecture, landscape and visual arts; arts, humanities and social sciences; economics and commerce; education; engineering, computing and mathematics; law; life and physical sciences; medicine and dentistry; and natural and agricultural sciences.

As the university in Australia considered in the recent Melbourne Institute rankings to be the best for undergraduate courses in Australia, all



Bruce Mackintosh, director of the international centre, and Margaret Anderson, manager of marketing and undergraduate admissions at the University of Western Australia

Chinese students and programs:

How many international students do you have? And how many Chinese students?

—redwolf

There are about 2,000 international students on campus, of whom about 120 are from China, but there are many more Chinese students from Southeast and East Asia.

Does your university have any joint programs available here in China?

—hostayi

Yes, we have programs with Tianjin University in Australian Studies, Shanghai Maritime University in transport studies, and we are developing several other programs in business, engineer-

ried about the prospects of finding a job in the east after graduation.

—From a corner of China

While the rest of Australia is currently in a slight recession in employment, Western Australia is expanding its economy particularly because of its exceptional resources and tourism potential.

What activities are offered at your university? Are there any especially for Chinese students?

—redwolf

Among the many clubs and societies for international students, there is a very strong Chinese students' club on campus that offers support and advice to students from China.

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Ask Ayi:

Q: My friends have recommended I send my son to study for his undergraduate degree in Malaysia, which they say offers high quality education and chances to continue studies at relatively low costs. Can you give me a clear picture of the advantages of education in Malaysia?

A: Malaysia is a member of the Commonwealth, meaning English language levels are very high. A number of renowned universities from the UK, Australia and the US have off-shore campuses in Malaysia.

More importantly, those off-shore schools, as well as local universities in Malaysia, provide a flexible, combined higher education program, named "1+3, 2+2, or 3+1". That means your son could spend one year in Malaysia for his undergraduate studies and then the following three in another Commonwealth member country, or two years in Malaysia and two years in another country, or three years in Malaysia and one year in another country. The decision is up to you, depending on your goals and financial abilities.

The costs of studying in Malaysia are quite reasonable. Annual expenses, including tuition fees and living expenditures, can easily be kept under \$10,000.

Q: Many young people prefer to study in Japan. But as far as I know, most of them have to learn Japanese first. What are the current standards for studying in Japan?

A: Japan opened its door to overseas students in 1983, aiming to receiving 100,000 international students in 20 years. By the end of last year, the country received 96,000 students, among whom 61.3 percent came from the Chinese mainland, 16.6 percent from South Korea, 4.5 percent from Taiwan, 2 percent from Malaysia and 1.6 percent from Thailand.

If you have no Japanese language skills or cannot pass the Japanese government's mandatory language test, you have to spend at least six months first learning the language in the country before starting any academic program.

You also need to be at least a high school graduate and have sufficient financial ability to support your studies.

(Edited by Ayi)

China to Send 5,000 Scholars Abroad in 2005

By Zhao Hongyi

Starting this year, China will annually send 5,000 young teachers from its universities and institutes to pursue PhD degrees and academic research in top universities and academies overseas.

Minister of Education Zhou Ji signed the plan into reality with the China Scholarship Council (CSC) on January 9 in Wuhan, Hubei Province. CSC is a non-profit institution affiliated to the ministry that will oversee selection of and subsidies to government-supported students sent abroad.

On the same day, 28 Chinese universities including Peking University, Tsinghua University and Nankai University joined the program and another 22 universities have expressed interest in taking part. The ministry has invited nearly all domestic universities to participate and set a deadline of the end of January.

The ministry will sponsor selected young scholars by covering all their expenditures abroad or jointly subsidize their costs with their domestic universities or institutes.

Splendid Australia: Excellent Courses in Western Australia

our courses are considered to be excellent. Internationally, the best-known ones are probably business, engineering, humanities and science.

Compared with the other seven universities of the Group of Eight, what do you think are the advantages of the University of Western Australia?

—JackieZhang

The University of Western Australia has a superb single campus, set in delightful surroundings on the Swan River. Perth has significantly lower living costs than other major cities in Australia.

What is emphasized in teaching students?

—jimkerry

Self development, so that our graduates are best equipped for their careers and lives of further development

Can you give us a brief history of your university and of Perth?

—monkeyking

The university was established in 1911 and until the 1970s was the only university in Perth. Perth itself was established in the late 19th century and is now a modern, thriving, multicultural city of approximately 1.5 million people.

Have you raised tuition fees this year?

—F777

Yes, but just by the Consumer Price Index, about two percent.

Courses:

I want to study mass media. Does your university have a strong program?

—F777

The University of Western Australia does not offer a mass communication program, but does offer a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. In this program, students study an arts major as well as units in communications studies, which include theory on communication as well as some practical studies. For more information, visit: www.arts.uwa.edu.au.

Do you have physical education classes? In China, students often have physical education classes in their first two years.

—ruanying

Students do not have to take classes in physical education unless studying for a degree in exercise and health science. Students who take this degree can study a wide range of sports.

There are many sporting facilities on campus including basketball, tennis and squash courts, swimming pools, hockey, football and cricket grounds. All students can make use of these facilities through competitions run by student sports clubs.

The campus of the University of Western Australia (UWA) stands on the banks of the Swan River in Perth, Western Australia. It was established in 1911 and has been providing excellent education to foreign students for more than four decades.

This Monday, Bruce Mackintosh, director of UWA's international center told *Beijing Today* readers in our Study Abroad Salon about the university's courses and student life. Mackintosh noted that UWA offered Chinese courses taught by Chinese nationals, meaning Chinese students should not have trouble fitting into the school's environment.

ing and science.

Do you have any teachers of Chinese nationality? Do you offer courses taught in Chinese, or on Chinese language, history and culture?

—F777

We have Chinese teachers in most faculties and they add considerably to the international flavor of the university. We also teach classes in Mandarin at all levels, including students for whom Chinese is their first language.

Do you have any exchange programs with Chinese universities?

—JackieZhang

The University sends Australian students to several Chinese universities to study Mandarin and we are establishing a few exchange programs, which will be supported by UMAP and Cheung Kong scholarships.

Student life:

What facilities are provided at student dormitories? What is the cost of living in dormitories? What other kind of accommodation is available?

—JackieZhang

There is accommodation for about 1,100 students in residential colleges on campus. Students have single rooms generally with shared bathrooms. Rooms are fully furnished with telephone and Internet connections. All meals are provided and there are limited cooking facilities.

The average cost of living in these is AU\$245 a week.

There is plenty of other accommodation for students who wish to share with others and do their own cooking. Costs at these places are generally lower.

Perth is a wonderful place. The problem is how I can reach the city and your university?

—tboy@sina.com.cn

The campus is only 10 minutes from the center of Perth and buses pass the campus every 15 to 20 minutes. You can certainly enjoy the campus and the many other opportunities that Perth provides very easily while studying here.

Your university is too far away from the economic belt of Australia. I am wor-



UWA has a diverse student body.



Winthrop Hall



The Ivy Gateway

Notice

Beijing Today will invite two guests from Monash University and the University of Melbourne to "Study Abroad Salon" Monday, January 24:

13:00: Mr. Don Gregg, General Manager (International), Monash University

14:00: Mr. Chris Downes, General Manager, Marketing & Recruitment (offshore), University of Melbourne

You can log on to: <http://bjtoday.ynet.com>, or forward questions to the host Ayi at: hostayi@ynet.com.

通知

“今日北京”将在下周一（1月24日）邀请Monash大学和墨尔本大学老师来“留学聊天室”与网友交流。具体安排是：

13:00: Monash大学国际部主任Mr. Don Gregg

14:00: 墨尔本大学国际部主任Mr. Chris Downes

欢迎届时登陆：
<http://bjtoday.ynet.com>，
或发问题给主持人阿义：
hostayi@ynet.com



Winthrop Hall (outside)

Photos provided by UWA

-Chasing Beauty-



By Shannon Lee

With Christmas and New Years over, I needed a beauty pick-me-up to tide me over until Spring Festival. I wasn't wanting for a new hairdo and my weekly facials were just not cutting it - I needed something that could put

were woken up with freshly squeezed watermelon juice and a Macao pork sandwich. Foot massage can be a little painful at times but do not be discouraged, you just have to

Tai Pan, Take Me Away

the pep back into my step. However, not even a new pair of darling heels did the job. It was then that I knew that I needed to pull out the big guns and get serious. Spa serious.

With real relaxation in mind, I headed over to



Shannon Lee

Tai Pan Foot Massage to give it a try. I figured I would start at the root of my problem, my feet. At Tai Pan they do not just focus on feet, as you can tell upon entering the spa they provide the whole spa experience, complete with relaxing decor, lighting, aromatherapy and calming ponds. I started to feel my qi realigning and I had not even started the massage yet.

After settling down in my private room, I sipped tea to warm up. My masseur entered with a warm herbal rose pedal footbath. Then I enjoyed a twenty-minute neck, back and shoulder massage while I soaked my feet. The masseur took the footbath away as another attendant presented me with a menu of complimentary snacks and refreshments. In just minutes I was discovering pressure points I never knew I had and my taste buds

get used to it. After pedal pounding, the attendant finished with a short leg massage. But the experience did not end there. I was invited to stay in my room and rest and enjoy more refreshments. I lay back in my reclining chair, pressed the button that called the attendant and ordered another round of snacks and did what anyone looking to raise their spirits would do...I sat back and watched an episode of *The Simpsons* on the flat screen TV. Foot massage, fresh fruit and international cable access - what more could a girl ask for?

This little piece of satellite-connected heaven is almost perfect in every way but like many great things it is a little pricey. Foot massages are 138 yuan. Don't fret; they have a happy hour before 6 pm. Needless to say I strolled out of Tai Pan with plenty of pep in my step tempered by the two pork sandwiches in my tummy.

Where: No.1 Xindongjie, Chaoyang **Open:** 11 am - midnight **Tel:** 8532 2177

Wax On Wax Off

By Wang Yao

Candles are capable of much more than providing light - they can set the mood of a room, be it relaxing, romantic or ritualistic. The DIY Aroma Candle store allows people to take those moods up a notch, by creating their own candles with fun shapes, soothing fragrances and personal style.

The process begins by choosing from the wide range of waxes, from transparent jelly wax in 32 colors to beading wax to carveable cubic wax. Even the wax's smell is an option, with choices including fragrances of fruit, flowers and perfumes like Chanel No. 5. The colors and odors are created using edible essences and pigments, meaning they pose no harm to users' lungs as they go up in smoke, according to a shop assistant.

Once wax selection is out of the way, customers can concern themselves with the candles' shapes. Among the options are small sculptures or candle cups. Outside materials, such as fresh lemon juice or dried fruit can be plunged inside the wax to create candles with added natural fragrance and aromatherapeutic qualities.

With Spring Festival drawing near, many customers are coming up with candles bearing symbols of good wishes to place at home and give as gifts. One such item has traditional festival scenes painted on its sides, which are then coated with a thin layer of beading wax to give a foggy feeling of times past.

Prices range from 20 to 40 yuan per candle. Assistance and instruction in candle creation from store staff is free.

Where: Zone C, B3, 77th Street mall, Xidan **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm



Fantasy Land



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

By Wang Yao

Film buffs, collectors, gamers and lovers of crazy Japanese stuff can find things to sate their cultural fetishes at the Rihunshe store in the New Generation shopping center in Xidan.

Collectible toys and models from the film world dominate a cabinet on the left hand of the store and fetch between 150 and 400 yuan. Miniature versions of such memorable creatures and characters as the original Alien, Predator, Neo from *The Matrix* and Spiderman stand on one shelf. Molded from hard plastic, they offer exquisite detail for their small statures. A little scarier is the latest line of action figures from the hellacious *Spawn* comics series.

Anime buffs should go straight to the middle shelf, which houses figurines and model craft from Japan's famous Gundam manga series. On hand are shrunken versions of



the series' heroes, five future freedom fighters sent from oppressed space colonies to strike against the oppressive Earth Alliance and their shadowy overlords, called Oz. The robotic warriors have real heft thanks to their metallic frames and range in size and price, from 40 to 2,500 yuan.

A more dynamic toy to come from Japan's robotic obsession is the Hello Robot, a home entertainment robot made by Japanese gaming legend Bandai Toys. A pink remote control ball can be used to tell the larger green ball to roll, turn, repeat words or even make conversation!

Store owner Shen Yanqing said the ball is programmed to recognize and remember words it hears frequently. Its computer brain can then assemble those words into digital stream-of-consciousness conversation. The Hello Robot is a like a simplified version of Sony's popular robotic pets and priced at a much more reasonable 550 yuan.

For a smaller taste of Japanese kitsch, check out Rihunshe's selection of little accessories and trinkets like sofa cushions, pencil boxes, face masks and vases. All are imported from China's island neighbor and go for 50 to 255 yuan.

Where: No.047, B2, New Generation mall, Xidan, Xicheng **Open:** 10 am - 9:30 pm



Tattoos You Take Off

By Wang Yao

Custom t-shirts are old hat in this town. To get the newest in gear just for you, check out the Yuchen Shoushui shop, which can stick customers' pictures and other designs on coats, pants, ties, hats, even underwear and shoes.

Owner Li Zhen previously worked as a stage designer and has long had a hobby of painting on clothes. He decided to make that hobby a business after many friends were enthusiastic about his artistic garments. Li says personally painted clothes are a great way to show one's personality and add character to a wardrobe.

Customers can give Li a rough idea of what they want, bring in explicit examples, or pick and choose from photo albums, as if getting a tattoo. He then pencil sketches a draft of the image on the item of choice for final confirmation before permanent paint is applied.

Inspired do-it-yourselfers can get full kits to create their own works of wearable art. Li provides a set that includes heavy silk perfect for absorbing color, paint, brushes, pins and other necessary materials. He charges 5 yuan to provide the first draft sketch, which can then be colored in, while the whole process costs 40 to 50 yuan.

The store also offers many finished products, like Converse sneakers painted with Peking opera masks (130 yuan). Li started with white high-tops, which he then painted yellow and black and finished with masks in bright colors. Other one-of-a-kind items bear pictures of totems or Egyptian images.

Where: Zone C, No.25, B2, 77th Street mall, Xidan **Open:** 10 am - 9:30 pm

Make It Fun Key

By Wang Yao

Tired of drab old keys in familiar dull bronze and silvery shades? Recognizing a possible niche in the market, the Meishefang stall in the 77th Street mall has started to address this style gap by offering colorful keys made to match customers' wildest imaginations.

The fun keys come in more than 60 basic designs and bright colors. Customers can get more precisely what they want by bringing in a favorite image and working with a shop assistant to translate it into key form.

In a surprisingly simple process, the store can punch out keys bearing cartoon characters, advertisements, Peking opera masks, pictures of film, pop and sports stars, animals or abstract designs.

The store can come up with colorful takes on all kinds of keys, from common house and car keys to little ones for desk drawers. Prices range from 10 to 20 yuan, depending on size and pattern.

Where: Zone C, B3, Xidan Culture Plaza **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm



Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

Furnished commercial/residential apartment of 106 square meters for lease. Free parking, the apartment is located on the third floor of a five-star hotel within the North-west Fourth Ring Road, close to shopping malls, banks, super market and restaurants. US \$1,000 per month plus utilities and deposit. Contact: Jennifer, 8844 7480, 13693189800, Email: chouhwa@yahoo.com

Language Exchange

Jimmy Mu, a Chinese man who can speak English fluently, wants to know more about foreign culture and customs. He wants to make friends with foreigners who want to study Chinese and want to do business in Beijing. Email: mushuhaiaa@hotmail.com, Tel: 83456137

A female Chinese German learner wants to have German-Chinese or German-English language writing friends, Contact: grace_mzy@yahoo.com.cn

Professional Help

Vacancy available for executive assistant. Proficiency with MS Office, fluent in English and a college degree is a must. Contact: Mr. Zhang, bestmastersh@163.com

An international four-star hotel is seeking a Food and Beverage Manager or a Food and Beverage Director. Chinese citizen with fluent English, prior experience in international hotel preferred. Send your resume and motivation letter to gmanager@novotelxinqiaobj.com

Disclaimer: Beijing Today does not take responsibility for verifying the authenticity of the personal classifieds and thus Beijing Today does not guarantee the accuracy, integrity or quality of the content. All content is the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

Jams

Zhou Yunpeng Poetry Concert

Zhou Yunpeng, lead singer of the band Mr. Zhou will give a poetry reading.

Where: Yugongyishan Bar, 1 Gongyibeilu, Chaoyang **When:** tonight, 9 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan (30 yuan for students) **Tel:** 6415 0687



Sand and Jessica

Local rock band Sand and American singer songwriter Jessica Meider provide a night of original music at Nameless Highland Bar.

Where: Nameless Highland Bar, Area 1, Building 1, Anhuili, Yayuncun, Chaoyang **When:** tonight, 9:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6489 1613

Wine by the Bottle

Young Professionals' Happy Hour "Wine by the Bottle" night will be held with global wine dealer Torres at Club Latinos on Wednesday. The event will begin at 6:30 pm with a selection of Torres' imported wines. Latinos' live band will begin performing at 9 pm.

Where: Club Latinos, at the south gate of Chaoyang Park, 1 Nongzhanguan Nanlu, Chaoyang **When:** January 26, 6:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6507 9898

Sports

Miyun Nanshan Ski Village

Ski at Miyun Nanshan Ski Village, the best ski village so far around Beijing, attracting more and more people. Join in and enjoy the beautiful white world!

Meet at 8 am outside Big Easy (south gate of Chaoyang park) this Saturday. **Cost:** 350 yuan/per for whole day **Tel:** 13011171326



Performances



Ney-Flames of Passion

The Ney-Flames of Passion dance troupe, which takes its name from an ancient musical instrument, will present Chinese audiences with a new vision of Turkey through diversified artistic styles. Featuring thirty-six beautiful Mediterranean dancers, this vibrant dance spectacular comes straight from the heart of Istanbul. With seductive belly dancing, stunning costumes and steamy Black Sea choreography, this show will leave you breathless.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** 7:30 pm, tonight - January 27 **Admission:** 100-1,680 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126



Stanislavsky Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Musical Theatre

This musical theater ballet troupe history dates back to the late 1920s. The troupe has long made an international name for itself and has been enthusiastically applauded in Japan, France, Hungary, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Latin America, Greece, Italy and Finland. On this tour they will perform Swan Lake and Notre Dame.

Where: Great Hall of the People **When:** January 24-25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,680 yuan **Tel:** 6608 1188

The Dances of the Dynasties

Performed by the Shanghai Song and Dance Ensemble, Dynasties, made its debut at the first China Art Festival in 1987. Renowned for its stage designs, music, choreography and especially its costumes, the show showcases the culture, traditions and way of life of the Chinese spanning 5,000 years, and features over 1,000 costumes, ranging from warriors, courtiers and mythical beings.

Where: Great Hall of the People **When:** January 29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,280 yuan **Tel:** 6608 1188



Movies

The Incredibles

Bob Parr used to be one of the world's greatest superheroes (known to all as "Mr. Incredible"), saving lives and fighting evil on a daily basis. But now, fifteen years later, Bob and his wife (a famous superhero in her own right) have adopted civilian identities and retreated to the suburbs to live normal lives with their three kids. Now he's a clock-punching insurance



Son's Room

Directed by Nanni Moretti, starring Nanni Moretti, Laura Morante and Giuseppe Sanflice. The first part of Moretti's Palme d'Or winner paints an unsentimental portrait of an ordinary, almost complacently happy family in a small Italian coastal town. Then the unthinkable occurs. The teenage son dies in a diving accident, leaving his parents and sister consumed by guilt.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** January 20, 7:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

claims adjuster fighting boredom and a bulging waistline. Itching to get back into action, Bob gets his chance when a mysterious communication summons him to a remote island for a top-secret assignment.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** opens January 26 **Tel:** 8211 5566



Er Mo

Directed by Zhou Xiaowen, it looks at China's rush to embrace capitalism with a wryly-empathetic portrait of Ermo in this 1994 rural drama. Among its numerous awards are Best Feature Film at the Locarno (Switzerland) Film Festival.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, tonight and Saturday **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303

Exhibitions

Abstract and Natural - Modern Print Works by Li Qiang

His abstract prints are as plain as earth with simple yet impressive lines which remind viewers of plants like rice and corn exposed to the midday sun, or aged windows, doors and old walls. Li's prints cleverly build a bridge between nature and people.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1 E Enjoy Paradise, Huaweili, north of Beijing Curio City, Chaoyang **When:** daily 9 am - 7 pm until January 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

A Journey Though Nepal

Photographer Li Yuxiang depicted a vivid and glaring Nepal with his camera.

Nepal, a neighboring country of China, where you can climb the highest mountain on the earth, enjoy natural, wild scenery, and witness the local's ancient practice of worshipping Buddha.

Where: Basement level 1, China World Shopping Mall, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** Daily 9 am - 9 pm until February 1 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6505 2288



Li Fuyuan's Colorful Paintings

Li's works are mainly portraits of various natural creatures and scenes. Li paints in strong colors, which gives his bold images a sense of wisdom, eagerness and strength suitable both for collection and interior decoration.

Where: Melodic Gallery, 14 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** daily 9 am - 5 pm until January 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6515 8123



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Activities

Chinese Medicine Tour to A Unique Hospital with Chinese Culture Club

Visit the courtyard where former American President George Bush senior lived as US representative to China in the 1970s and which is now a traditional Chinese hospital. Doctors will give you an overview of acupuncture, massage and other treatments.

Meet at 1:50 pm in the McDonald's at the domed building with a clock on top, south-east of Tiananmen Square this Saturday **Cost:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6432 9341

Music

Pop Awards Ceremony

The Twelfth China Pop Songs Billboard Chart awards ceremony will be held, with many pop singers participating, including Jay Chou, Jolin Cai, Fang Zuming (Jacky Chan's son), S.H.E. from Hong Kong, and Stephanie Sun from Singapore, as well as mainland singers such as Man Jiang, Zhao Wei and Xu Wei.

Where: Workers' Gymnasium **When:** 7:30 pm, January 22 **Admission:** 200-1,600 yuan **Tel:** 6501 6605



TV and Radio Highlights

HBO	
21 Friday	
Eraser	9 pm
22 Saturday	
Gigli	9 pm
23 Sunday	
Hulk	8 pm
24 Monday	
Excess Baggage	11:20 pm
25 Tuesday	
Matchstick Men	10:50 pm
26 Wednesday	
Gattaca	9 pm
27 Thursday	
Star Trek Nemesis	10:55 pm
CCTV-9	
Monday - Friday	
Around China	6:30 am
Culture Express	8:30 am
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	11:30 am
Culture Express	2:30 pm
Nature and Science /	
Chinese Civilization	5:30 pm
Dialogue	7:30 pm
News Updates /	
Asia Today	8 pm
Sports Scene	11:15 pm
Saturday	
Travelogue	9:30 am
Center Stage	11:30 am
Sunday	
Sports Weekend	10 am
Documentary	10:30 am
This Week	12:30 am
China Radio International 91.5 FM	
Monday - Friday	
Easy FM Afternoon	2-7 pm
Fun in Beijing	5-5:30 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Saturday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Euro Hit 40	12:05-1 pm
Musique Sans Frontières	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm
Sunday	
Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Jazz Beat	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language-exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518

By Zhang Jianzhong

By Joel Kirkhart

Escaping Beijing for a weekend to an even bigger city may seem a strange way to get away from it all, but a few days of walking around Shanghai can be exactly that. The capital's reputed rival has a lot going for it and offers an intriguing mix of modernity and dynamism with antiquated charm and restrained beauty.

Shanghai's skyline is towering, but from the ground the city actually feels pretty compact. That means that whether its along the Jiangpu river, down shopping streets surging with people or deep into the quiet, evocative lanes of the French Concession, Shanghai is a town for walking.

One place it certainly pays off to have a mind for pounding the pavement is the phenomenal Shanghai Museum, one of the city's top attractions and arguably the finest museum in the country. Just be sure to wear comfortable shoes, as even a quick circuit around the galleries equals half a day on the feet.

The four-storey museum was designed and built over a decade ago to look like a *ding*, an ancient Chinese bronze vessel, of which there are many in its superb collection. The fact-packed audio tour – no Roger Moore-narrated nonsense this – offers helpful guidance through the astounding bronze collection, which includes hundreds of pieces from as early as the Shang Dynasty (1600-1100 BC), the immense jade room and the porcelain and painting sections, which just go on and on and on. The smaller selection of elegant hardwood furniture from the Ming and Qing dynasties is definitely worth a look too.

Out of doors, the prime place for exploring by foot in Shanghai is the old French Concession. The area was built up with Western-style structures in the mid-1800s as foreigners carved chunks out of coastal China, but never got too French – most of its residents remained Chinese. Many buildings in “French-town,” which extends south from upscale shopping street Huaihai Lu, are showing their age, but their crumbling plaster and weathered wood shutters only add to their palpable flavor of the past.

Beneath canopies of old trees, alleys in the French Concession open into unexpected views of elegant villas, vegetable markets or little stores. Careful inspection pays off in minor delights like ornately sculpted trim around windows, wrought iron gates and little bakeries tucked tightly between buildings.

The boutiques that pepper the lanes of the concession are far more rewarding places to shop than Shanghai's major commercial streets like up-market Huaihai Lu and old and packed Nanjing Lu. One section of hip Maoming Lu is nearly wall-to-wall with tailors and clothing stores that specialize in silk *qipaos* (cheongsam) and other traditional Chinese garments. Further west, Shanxi Nanlu features an unexpected number of furnishing stores that range in specialty from modern designer pieces to antiques and reproductions to funky imports from around Asia – but what they tend to share are high prices.

The French Concession is



Shanghai by Foot

The towering Jinmao Building is the architectural high point of Pudong and offers spectacular views across the Huangpu River.



Fading colonial glory at the former Richard Hotel



Photos by Joel Kirkhart

The Art Deco facades of the Bund make it one of Shanghai's prime spots for a stroll.

and stores. It is the realm of high-rolling tourists and Shanghai's beautiful people – for a weekend walk-a-thon, certainly worth a look, but maybe not a prolonged stay.

Any tour of Shanghai, be it on foot or otherwise, must include a visit to the Bund, a two-kilometer strip of riverfront that harks back to when the city was a British colony. The street is steeped in history thanks to its magnificent, Art Deco buildings including such icons as the Customs House and the Peace Hotel. First known as the Cathay Hotel when it was built by opium tycoon Victor Sassoon, the Peace remains the archetypal symbol of the glories and extravagance of Shanghai's checkered past.

The newest icon along the riverfront is the 3 on the Bund complex at the corner of Guangdong Lu, which has a large Armani store at its ground floor and houses a superb art gallery and Jean George, an elegant French restaurant that spars with perennial favorite M on the Bund for top billing in Shanghai's Western food scene. Either is worth a visit if only for a drink and a chance to take in the stellar views from their rooftop terraces. Walk much further south along the Bund, though, and the charm wears away as the storefronts turn into trinket shops selling junk to hordes of tourists. Run away, run away...

A stroll along the wide terrace that runs along the river brings out people's priorities. Some stare intently at the Bund, fascinated by the palpable sense of history and the Art Deco architecture. Others spend the walk turned in the opposite direction, across the river to the modern steel and glass towers that dominate Pudong, the heart of Shanghai's explosive economic growth. The tallest point on the plot of former farmland belongs to the ugly Shanghai TV tower, but the top spot for style has to be the gargantuan Jinmao Building, one of the prides of modern Shanghai. Tourists can pay to ride an express elevator to the top for views a heady 88 stories above ground, but a fine view onto the Bund and beyond can be had for free from the lobby or coffee shop of the Grand Hyatt hotel, which occupies the 54th to 87th floors.

A more down to earth hotel more in tune with the vibe of the Bund than Pudong and worth at least a quick look is the Jiangpu Hotel, formerly known as the Richard Hotel. About a century ago, this was the place to be in Shanghai, the site of the city's first electrical light and telephone call, and the temporary home to such guests as Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell and Charlie Chaplin. Today, the hotel's best days are far past and its enormous, worn rooms are priced to appeal to backpackers, but a view of what it was in its prime can still be found in the grand room on the third floor, a commanding space with deep red brick walls and a glass ceiling.

And therein lies the beauty of a Shanghai weekend walking tour. The city may move at a frantic pace, but travelers don't have to, and slow, careful inspection can reveal many hidden jewels. Whether it's a century-old cherub sculpted into a building side, a handful of *xiaolongbao* dumplings or a classic work of art, the pleasures of Shanghai are best seen and sampled on foot.



Skating on Shichahai

Photo by Hester Xu

Ice Cold Fun

By Hester Xu and Yan Zhang

Much as it may leave you wanting to do nothing more than stay indoors, winter provides a good reason to get out and enjoy the cold. Skating, ice sledding or spinning a top on the city's frozen lakes has been a part of Beijing life for centuries.

During the Qing dynasty, people went to Shichahai, Houhai, Jishuitan and the moat surrounding the Inner City to skate and play on ice sleds during winter. Ice skates were virtually unknown; most people simply tied wooden strips inlaid with iron rods to the soles of their shoes.

In his *Recording Wonderful Scenes of Beijing in the Winter*, Qing dynasty essayist Pan Rongbi wrote, “As for those slide-scratching [speed skating] on ice, they all wear shoes fitted with iron teeth and slide on the ice like streaking stars and striking lightning bolt...”

After last year's tepid winter left many believing ice skating was going the same way as Beijing's hutongs, the city's open-air ice rinks are all doing a thriving business with the coming of another freezing winter.

Shichahai

As the earliest natural ice rink in Beijing, Shichahai has been known as “the winter paradise for common people” during the last one hundred years.

Joyful laughter mingles with exhilarating shouts, Shichahai is a wonderful spot for skating, playing all sorts of ice sled, riding an “ice bike” and, a year-round favorite, flying a kite. You can also sometimes see boys of various nationalities practicing ice hockey in one corner of the lake, looking for all the world like the opening of an international game for an all-star team.

Where: south bank of Shichahai.

Options: speed skating area and practice area, ice skates, sleds and bicycles available for hire, also a free ice hockey rink. For the truly masochistic, a small section of lake is kept free of ice for winter swimming.

Admission: Access to the ice rink – 10 yuan weekdays, 15 yuan on weekends and public holidays.

Beihai Park

Beihai was once the private ice skating rink of the royal family. These days it is open to all, but only for sledding – no skates allowed.

Where: Beihai Park, south gate pier and east gate pier.

Options: Ice sleds available for hire.

Admission: 5 yuan to get into the park, access to the ice rink is free.

Yuyuantan Park

This large park in the west of Beijing is another popular spot for ice-sledding enthusiasts in winter.

Where: South bank of the east and west lakes in Yuyuantan Park.

Options: Sledding only, no ice skates allowed. Winter swimming also available from the east bank of the East Lake.

Admission: 2 yuan for the park, access to ice rink is free.

Zizhuyuan Park

Established during the Ming Dynasty, Zizhuyuan Park is famous for its flourishing bamboo groves, which give it an appearance of South China.

In winter the frozen lake surface is transformed as colorful figures glide back and forth across its surface.

Where: West side of Zizhuyuan Park.

Options: Speed skating area, practice area and ice hockey rink.

Admission: 10 yuan for park, access to ice rink free.